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CONTESTED ETHNIC IDENTITY: THE CASE OF MACEDONIAN CANADIANS IN
TORONTO, 1940-1996

By

HRISTO KOSTOV

Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfilment of the requirements
For the Ph.D. degree in History

Department of History
Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa

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ABSTRACT

CONTESTED ETHNIC IDENTITY: THE CASE OF MACEDONIAN CANADIANS IN
TORONTO, 1940-1996

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This thesis attempts to contribute to a better understanding of the different ethnic identities of immigrants from the geographic region of Macedonia living in Toronto and to discern why it is that their ethnic identities very often collide with and exclude one another. The geographic region of Macedonia is defined as an area that includes the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), also known as Vardar Macedonia, Aegean Macedonia, which is a region in northwestern Greece, and Pirin Macedonia, a region in southwestern Bulgaria. The dissertation demonstrates that, due to historical and political circumstances that led to the division of the geographic region of Macedonia among three countries, the immigrants who came to Toronto from this part of the Balkan peninsula developed three very distinct ethnic identities – Bulgarian, Macedonian and Greek – as well as at least three different meanings of the terms ‘Macedonia’ and ‘Macedonian.’ Once in Toronto, the newcomers proclaimed their ethnic identities through their churches, ethnocultural organizations, community newspapers, and on Canadian censuses. All three communities attempted to monopolize the historical facts about Macedonia. The author concludes that the conflict among the three groups cannot be defused unless all sides admit that the other two Macedonian identities exist and, more importantly, these identities can co-exist and they do not negate one another.

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I dedicate this work to the Bulgarian war hero Colonel Konstantin Kavarnaliev (1866-1913)

with all my respect to his heroism!

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INTRODUCTION

Scholars who write about an ethnic group in North America usually trace its migration from the old country to the New World. Then they look at its settlement patterns, occupational specialization, kin networks and numerous other issues, related to the integration, sociocultural and political organizations and gender relations among the members of the particular ethnic group. All these areas continue to attract the attention of historians, ethnohistorians, anthropologists and sociologists.

The few published works on Macedonian Canadian immigrants in Toronto managed to cover most of the above-mentioned themes. Harry Vjekoslav Herman's *Men in White Aprons* analyzed the remarkable involvement of Macedonian Canadians in the Toronto restaurant business.¹ The settlement patterns of the Macedonian community in Toronto, its ethnic organizations, language and churches were the subjects of two monographs, written in English and dedicated to the Macedonian Canadians. The first of these was written by Peter Vasiliadis, who based his study on his M.A. thesis. His book attempted to present a comprehensive study of the Macedonian Canadian community from 1903 to 1965 and in fact touched upon ethnic identity, which is the major concern of this thesis.² Five years later, Lillian Petroff published the other academic study in English. She emphasized the village societies of the early immigrants from Macedonia, their community life, as well as the influence of the church on group ethnicity.³

¹ Harry V. Herman, *Men in White Aprons: A Study of Ethnicity and Occupation* (Toronto: P. Martin Associates, 1978).

² Peter Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?: Identity and Ethnicity Among the Toronto Macedonians* (NY: AMS Press Inc., 1989).

³ Lillian Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers: The Macedonian Community in Toronto to 1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

Each ethnic group that crossed the ocean deserves to have its story told, because every ethnic group is unique. Nevertheless, south Europeans and particularly Balkan immigrants had very similar patterns of settlement and integration in North America. The immigrants from Macedonia, however, were unusual, not only with their settlement or occupations, but with their complex ethno-national and regional identities. Regardless of the compelling stories of Vasiliadis and Petroff about the community life of the immigrants from Macedonia, their books have serious flaws. Petroff and Vasiliadis could not explain the complex phenomenon of the quite late development of the Macedonian ethnic identity, which started in the 1940s.

Furthermore, both scholars misinterpreted numerous archival documents and affiliations of cultural and political organizations and churches in Toronto, presenting them as ethnically Macedonian, when in fact they were of a strong Bulgarian ethnic identity. Petroff mentioned John Grudeff as a significant leader of the Macedonian community in the inter-war period, implying his Macedonian identity.⁴ The Macedonian identity of Grudeff is in doubt, particularly in an interview with the anthropologist Irene Markoff, taped in 1977 in Toronto, in which Grudeff explicitly stated that he was Bulgarian and in his opinion, there were no ethnic Macedonians in Toronto until the creation of Tito's Yugoslavia.⁵ In fact, Grudeff was born in the village of Gramatikovo, near the town of Yambol, in southeastern Bulgaria, i.e. relatively far from Macedonia. Grudeff's scrapbook with personal notes was also written entirely in Bulgarian.⁶ Vasiliadis even went as far as to proclaim the MPO (Macedonian Political Organization) as a very important ethnic Macedonian organization,

⁴ *Ibid.*, 72, 102-3.

⁵ John Grudeff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 9 February 1977 (MHSO collection).

⁶ John Grudeff, *Scrapbook* (Multicultural History Society of Ontario collection).

counting only on its name.⁷ The numerous books, pamphlets, convention papers, and newspaper articles produced by the MPO in English and Bulgarian, condemning all Yugoslav attempts at the creation of a Macedonian ethnicity separate from the Bulgarians, prompted the Macedonian scholar Tanas Vražinovski to denounce the MPO as an anti-Macedonian organization and a mouthpiece of Bulgarian nationalist propaganda in North America.⁸

All these flaws and inaccuracies raise a number of questions. When did the Macedonian ethnic identity start in Canada? Were the first newcomers from Macedonia in 1903 ethnic Bulgarians or ethnic Macedonians? What about their cultural organizations and churches? Why did they use only the Bulgarian language? Why do their first three churches continue to be called Macedono-Bulgarian churches? Why did ethnic Macedonian identity start in the 1940s and how did it continue to develop in Canada? Did all immigrants have one monolithic ethnic identity or did they have different ethnic affiliations?

The other scholars who wrote on Macedonian or Bulgarian issues related to the Macedonian immigration to Toronto could not, or rather did not wish to, answer these questions. The Macedonian anthropologist Tatjana Kaličanin wrote a monograph on the Macedonian family in Canada, published in Skopje in Macedonian. Her research concentrated on kin networks.⁹ The Bulgarian scholars Assen Baliksi and Bonka Stoyanova-Boneva dedicated their book *Balkanski Biznesmeni v Kanada* [Balkan Businessmen in Canada] to the entrepreneurs in the Bulgarian community of Toronto and thus, they were not able or willing to explain the emergence and the development of a separate ethnic

⁷ Vasiliadis, *Whose Are You*, 232-40.

⁸ Tanas Vražinovski, *Organizacionnata Struktura na Makedonskoto Iseleništvvo vo Kanada* [Organizational Structure of the Macedonian Emigration to Canada] (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1994), 144.

⁹ Tatjana Kaličanin, *Doseluvanje I Integracija na Makedonskoto Semejstvo vo Kanada I SAD* [Settlement and Integration of the Macedonian Family in Canada] (Skopje: Folklore Institute: Marko Cepenkov, 1997).

Macedonian identity.¹⁰ The Macedonian historian Tanas Vražinovski concentrated his efforts on the Macedonian cultural and political organizations in Canada, and avoided mentioning that all village societies in Toronto used the Bulgarian language for their by-laws until the 1960s. He published in Macedonian the texts of the supposedly original village society by-laws, created before the Second World War.¹¹ The biggest issue with the studies done by Kaličanin, Baliksi and Vražinovski is that they are not translated into English or French and thus, they are still not accessible to most Canadian scholars. The unanswered questions about the ethnic Macedonian identity in Toronto, where the immigration from Macedonia was largely concentrated, as well as the serious gaps and misinterpretations of historical documents, strongly encouraged the writing of this dissertation.

This thesis will demonstrate that, due to historical and political circumstances that led to the geographic division of Macedonia among three countries – Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria – the immigrants that came to Toronto from this part of the Balkan peninsula developed three distinct identities: Bulgarian, Greek and Macedonian, as well as at least three different meanings of the terms ‘Macedonia’ and ‘Macedonian.’ My research of archival sources and oral history interviews will confirm that the immigrants from Macedonia who came to Toronto until the 1940s had a very strong Bulgarian identity if they were of Slavic origin and very rarely a Greek national identity, unless they were of Greek ethnic origin. In the mid-1940s, however, a new Macedonian ethnic identity started to emerge, supported by the left-wing old immigrants and the newcomers from Yugoslavia and Greece. This identity flourished by the 1960s.

¹⁰ Assen Baliksi and Bonka Stoyanova-Boneva, *Balkanski Biznesmeni v Kanada* [Balkan Businessmen in Canada] (Sofia: LIK, 1993).

¹¹ Vražinovski, *Organizacionnata Struktura* [Organizational Structure...].

This rift among Macedonian immigrants divided the community into three camps. The pro-Yugoslav left-wingers created the ethnic-Macedonian community, the right-wing group, and particularly most old generation immigrants, continued to be staunch Bulgarian nationalists with a regional Macedonian identity. For them, Macedonia was a Bulgarian region and thus they called themselves, and continue to identify themselves as Bulgarians from Macedonia. A third group of newcomers, the smallest, consisted of newcomers from Greek (Aegean) Macedonia. They joined the Greek community and were called *gârkomani/grkomani* (literally 'Greek maniacs') by the ethnic Macedonian and Bulgarian communities. Both communities continue to consider the *gârkomani/grkomani* as traitors. The *grkomani*, however, must not be confused with the ethnic Greek Macedonians, whose native language was Greek, but rather they should be considered as a sub-group of the Hellenic community in Toronto, because of their native Bulgarian language. In Toronto, these three groups started to proclaim their ethnic identities through their churches, ethnocultural organizations, community newspapers and Canadian censuses. The three ethnic groups also attempted to monopolize the terms 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' for exclusive use only by their group. These arguments about historical heritage in the Balkans and in North America led to many media battles and violent clashes. This thesis, however, argues that the simultaneous existence of one ethnic and two non-ethnic regional Macedonian identities is possible and these identities do not have to negate and exclude one another.

This dissertation will deal with the immigrants of Slavic origin who came from the geographic region of Macedonia to Toronto in the period 1940-1996. The geographic region of Macedonia is defined as an area that includes the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), also known as Vardar Macedonia; Aegean Macedonia, which is a region in northwestern Greece, and Pirin Macedonia, a region in southwestern Bulgaria. To

avoid confusion, the terms 'ethnic Macedonian' or 'ethnic Macedonian from Greece/Bulgaria' will be applied solely to people who consider themselves to be Macedonian by ethnic origin or ethnic/national identity. The terms 'Hellenic Macedonian'/'Macedonian from Greece' and 'Macedonian from Bulgaria'/'Macedono-Bulgarian' will be applied solely as geographical and regional terms throughout the thesis. The term 'Macedonia' will be used only as a geographic term, describing a Balkan region, whereas the country of Macedonia will be referred to as FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia). The immigrants from Macedonia of non-Slavic origin, i.e. Albanians, Turks, Arumanians (Vlachs), and Gypsies are not the subject of this thesis. The only exception is the ethnic Greek population of Macedonia, which sent immigrants who became very involved in the conflict over ethnic identity and history with the ethnic Macedonians in Toronto.

This dissertation relies upon three different types of literature: national identity development and theories; Balkan history; and ethnic studies of the Bulgarian, Macedonian and, to a lesser extent, Greek settlement of Toronto. Archival and printed primary sources are used to uncover the huge contradiction between the data in the primary sources and their interpretations and distortions in the academic literature. Twenty-two oral interviews, conducted in Toronto by the author and other researchers with representatives of the ethnic Macedonian, Macedono-Bulgarian, and Hellenic Macedonian communities are also used as a crucial part of this thesis. These interviews complement the documentary analysis and clarify the positions of each of the three communities (ethnic Macedonian, Macedono-Bulgarian and Hellenic Macedonian) on the Macedonian ethnic identity or the so called "Macedonian Question." The informants also shed more light on the foundation of the three Macedono-Bulgarian churches in Toronto and the first Macedonian ethnocultural organizations in the city, and the argument to which ethnic group these organizations belong. In a thesis that

employs a qualitative approach, oral interviews are very valuable. As the Italian oral historian Alessandro Portelli wrote: “Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did.”¹²

While the literature on Macedonian migration to Toronto and to North America as a whole suffers from substantial gaps and misconceptions, scholarship on national identity, nationalism and nation-building has significantly advanced in the last five decades. The major rift in the historiography of nationalism is between proponents of ethnic and proponents of civic/political nationalism theories. These concepts of ethnic versus civic nationalism were developed by Hans Kohn.¹³ Numerous academics have focused in recent decades on the ways that modern nationalists use the past to create, and promote, a compelling narrative for the state. A number of sociologists and anthropologists have dealt with the subject of national identity in order to understand its origins. Fredrik Barth and Clifford Geertz, beginning in the 1960s and 1970s respectively, began testing the early twentieth-century notions that race and national identity were static, biologically-based attributes. Geertz argued that nations emerged because of certain “primordial attachments” such as belief in a shared lineage, though he was primarily interested in nationality as one component of a society’s broader culture.¹⁴ Barth focused more narrowly on the way individuals of a given community defined themselves and others. His influential book *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* maintained that ethnic identities are ascriptions and self-ascriptions, held by actors, and produced and reproduced by actors in the course of social interaction.¹⁵

¹² Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 50.

¹³ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Collier Books, 1944).

¹⁴ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 59, 234-54.

¹⁵ Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969).

Anthony D. Smith revived in the 1980s the theory of nationalism as a phenomenon that could be traced to pre-modern times, arguing for the existence of primordial “ethnic core” foundations that are a key element for every nation.¹⁶ Smith’s arguments have been quoted extensively in the Balkans, because the large majority of Balkan academics believe in the ethnically-rooted nation that predates modernity by centuries. The other prominent social scientist who added to Smith’s theory in the 1990s was the American sociologist Pierre L. Van den Berghe, who argued in *The Ethnic Phenomenon* that nations and ethnic communities are really extensions of kinship units and thus, myths of shared descent largely correspond to real biological ancestry.¹⁷

In the 1980s and the 1990s, however, an increasing number of historians and social scientists strongly criticized the primordialist national theories and articulated even more detailed arguments about the socially constructed nature of nationalism and national identity. Ernst Gellner¹⁸ and Eric Hobsbawm¹⁹ considered the nation an entirely new phenomenon that was a product of modernity, and more particularly, of the French revolution. Benedict Anderson maintained the socially constructed character of nations, defining them as ‘imagined communities.’²⁰

Arguments that challenge the civic/ethnic nationalism divide will be also reviewed in this thesis. Algis Prazauskas is among the social scientists who argue that, in fact, every nation has both ethnic and civic components. He also claimed that: “the emergence of nations and the formation of nationalism are parallel developments.”²¹ Particularly useful for

¹⁶ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Cambridge-Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

¹⁷ Pierre L. Van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995).

¹⁸ Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983).

¹⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

²⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 2006).

²¹ Algis Prazauskas, *Ethnicity, Nationalism, Politics* (The Hague: Institute of Social Studies, 1998).

this thesis, especially for explaining the emergence of Montenegrin nationalism is the economic consideration introduced by James S. Coleman, who claimed that economic reasons can be a more influential factor for the emergence of a nation than race, gender, religion or any other socially or biologically-based identities.²² For the last five decades, ethnic nationalism has been vilified, whereas civic nationalism has been presented as democratic, consensual and liberal, which in fact was part of Kohn's thesis for nationalism.²³ The Australian political scientist David Brown, on the other hand, challenged this concept of dividing nationalisms into good and bad types, according to their civic or ethnic basis.²⁴

The question of the existence of the Macedonian language also sparked an interesting debate among linguistic and political circles in the Balkans and elsewhere. A number of Western linguists support the Macedonian argument that Macedonian is an independent southern Slavic language. The American linguist Horace G. Lunt argued that, by 1700, there was already considerable difference between the dialects of Eastern Bulgaria and Western Bulgaria including Macedonia and these western dialects became later the natural basis of Macedonian.²⁵ Victor Friedman²⁶ and Olga Mišeska Tomić²⁷, as well as a large majority of linguists consider Macedonian to be a very closely related to Bulgarian but a separate literary language codified in Yugoslavia in 1944-45. Some other prominent linguists, however,

²² James S. Coleman, "Rights, Rationality and Nationality," In Albert Breton, et al. *Nationalism and Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-13.

²³ Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*.

²⁴ David Brown, "Are there Good and Bad Nationalisms?" *Nations and Nationalism* 5 (2), 281-302.

²⁵ Horace G. Lunt, "Time and the Macedonian Language" In Christina Kramer and Brian Cook, eds. *Guard the Work Well Bound: Proceedings of the Third North American-Macedonian Conference on Macedonian Studies* (Indiana Slavic Studies, Volume 10, 1999), 11-12.

²⁶ Victor Friedman, "Macedonian Historiography, Language, and Identity in the Context of the Yugoslav Wars of Succession" In Kramer and Cook, eds. *Guard the Work Well Bound*, 79-80.

²⁷ Olga Mišeska Tomić, "Macedonian as an Ausbau Language," In Michael Clyne, ed. *Pluricentric Languages: Differing Norms in Different Nations* (Berlin-New York, 1992), 437-54.

including Michael Clyne,²⁸ Otto Kronsteiner²⁹ and Vittore Pisani³⁰ consider Macedonian to be a Bulgarian dialect presented as a language primarily for political reasons.

Regarding the development of Macedonia across time and space, a number of prominent historians mentioned Macedonia and its historical heritage as part of Ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, Bulgaria, Byzantium and the Ottoman Empire. Barbara and Charles Jelavich wrote voluminous works that offered an outstanding analysis on the rise of the Balkan states and the place of Macedonia in the national awakening of the Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek nations.³¹ Another excellent source for Balkan history, and particularly for the development of the various nationalities in Yugoslavia, is *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, written by the Croatian scholar and Columbia University professor Ivo Banac.³² In his chapter on Macedonian Nationalism, Banac concludes on the basis of numerous archival documents that rudimentary Macedonian nationalism started to emerge not earlier than the 1930s under strong communist pressure.³³

George W. White's *Nationalism and Territory: Constructing Group Identity in Southeastern Europe* gives very insightful examples of overlapping national identities and the complexities that occur even when a country picks its official name, e.g. Rumania versus Romania.³⁴ A very profound analysis of the Balkan nationalities and the late appearance of the Macedonian nation appear in the work of the British historian of Turkish descent Feroz

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 438.

²⁹ Otto Kronsteiner, *Sachinyavaneto na t.nar. makedonski knizhoven ezik* [The Creation of the So Called Macedonian Literary Language] (Sofia: Macedonian Scientific Institute, 1993).

³⁰ Vittore Pisani, "Il Macedonico," [The Macedonian] *Paideia, Rivista Letteraria di informazione bibliografica*, 12, (1957), 250.

³¹ Barbara Jelavich, *The Balkans* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965); Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich, *Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920: A history of East Central Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986).

³² Ivo, Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1984).

³³ *Ibid.*, "The Macédoine," 307-27.

³⁴ George W. White, *Nationalism and Territory: Constructing Group Identity in Southeastern Europe* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).

(F.A.K.) Yasamee.³⁵ The Serbian-American scholar Stoyan Pribichevich pays attention to the debate on the connection of Ancient Macedonia and the FYROM. He dismisses any relation or continuity between the ancient and the modern Macedonian states.³⁶ The Oxford-educated English scholar of Bulgarian origin Kyril Drezov adds to this debate, concluding that it is difficult to comprehend the contemporary Greek claims on Macedonia and Macedonian identity merely with the argument of the Greekness or non-Greekness of ancient Macedonia.³⁷ Hugh Poulton analyses all the sides involved in the so called Macedonian question and sheds some light on the entrenched positions over Macedonia of Greece, Bulgaria, and to some extent of Serbia and Albania.³⁸ Another anthropologist, Anastasia Karakasidou, highlights the extent to which the mere discussion of the well-known Slav minority in Northern Greece as “Macedonian” can elicit bitter feelings of resentment among even moderate Greeks.³⁹ A very close study to this thesis is the work of Loring Danforth, who uses the ethnic Macedonian (in his terms ‘Slavic Macedonian’) and Greek Macedonian communities in Australia to illustrate the intense passions over the use of the term “Macedonian.” He also touches upon a very neglected, but crucial issue, how national identity is constructed at the individual level.⁴⁰ A parallel with Canada indicates that such a phenomenon exists in Toronto, where cousins or even brothers may claim completely different ethnic origin – Greek and Macedonian, or Macedonian and Bulgarian.

³⁵ F.A.K. Yasamee, “Nationality in the Balkans: The Case of the Macedonians,” In G. Ozdogan et al. *Balkans: A Mirror of the New World Order* (Istanbul: EREN, 1995).

³⁶ Stoyan Pribichevich, *MACEDONIA: Its People and History* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 37-8.

³⁷ Kyril Drezov, “Macedonian Identity: An Overview of the Major Claims” In James Pettifer, ed. *The Macedonian Question* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 48.

³⁸ Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

³⁹ Anastasia Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁴⁰ Loring Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Keith Brown explores in a great detail the role of the past, and particularly the memory of historical events, in shaping a national identity.⁴¹ The Macedonian archaeologist Ivan Mikulčik, who bases his research only on archaeological evidence,⁴² is a rare example in the FYROM of a non-biased scholar.

Most other historians and social scientists produce monographs and scholarly articles that are literally on the rim of science fiction. Taško D. Belčev, whose grandfather committed suicide during the dictatorship of General Ioannis Metaxas in Greece, turned his research into personal revenge against everything that is Greek. The name of the Greek island Crete, he claims, derives from the Macedonian word *krit* [hidden], whereas *The Iliad* and *the Odyssey* are part of the ancient [ethnic] Macedonian and not Greek mythology.⁴³ He goes so far as to argue that there is a link between the name of the Macedonian city of Ber and the name of the German capital Berlin.⁴⁴ Ljudmil Spasov wrote a dissertation in the late 1980s and a monograph in 2005, based on his Ph.D. thesis on the *Bulgarian-Russian Dictionary* of Konstantin Petkovich, published in 1848 in St. Petersburg and presented it as a *Macedono-Russian Dictionary*, which is an explicit forgery of an archival source. The original manuscript of the dictionary is kept in the Russian archives in St. Petersburg.⁴⁵ One small detail considering the dictionary is that its full title, according to the original edition is: *Bulgarian-Russian Dictionary*, compiled by the Bulgarian Konstantin Petkovich.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 2003).

⁴² Ivan Mikulčik, *Srednovkovni Gradovi I Tvrđini Vo Makedonija* [Medieval Towns and Castles in Macedonia] (Skopje: Open society Institute Macedonia, 1996).

⁴³ Taško D. Belčev, *Makedonija: 4,000 Godini Istorija, Civilizacija I Pismenost* [Macedonia: 4,000 Years of History, Civilization, and Written Records] (Skopje: Strk, 1996), 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 28-9.

⁴⁵ Ljudmil Spasov, *Izbrani Poglavlja od Istorijata na Makedonskiot Pismen Jazik* [Selected Titles of the History of the Macedonian Literary Language] (Skopje: Kultura, 2005).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

Blaže Koneski⁴⁷, Lazar Koliševski,⁴⁸ and Mihailo Apostolski⁴⁹ are also notorious for a number of falsified archival documents and deliberate mistranslations and misrepresentations. Their works reflected their personal negative experiences with the Bulgarian authorities. Blaže Koneski, born in Vardar Macedonia to a family with a long tradition of serving in the Serbian army and Serbian guerrillas, known as *chetniks*, considered Serbian to be his native language. In 1944-45 Tito persuaded him that it was better for Macedonia to have its own alphabet than to use the Serbian one, as Koneski insisted.⁵⁰ The other famous academic, Mihailo Apostolski, was a major in the Yugoslav army, but when the Germans invaded Yugoslavia in April 1941 they captured him. His father, a Bulgarian army veteran from Vardar Macedonia, wrote a letter to Sofia on behalf of his son. The Germans released Apostolski and allowed him to go to Bulgaria. The Bulgarian army offered him the rank of captain, which he considered unsatisfactory and thus, he offered his services to Tito. After the war, Apostolski became an academic and a very prolific author and historian, dedicated to the affirmation of the Macedonian nation, identity and language, following Tito's orders.⁵¹ Lazar Koliševski was born in Macedonia but he was raised in Serbia and when he went to Macedonia in 1941, he spoke only Serbian. Koliševski also claimed that he had two native lands – Serbia and Macedonia. He was sentenced to death as a Serbian collaborator and a Communist by the Bulgarian courts, but he was pardoned by Tzar Boris III. Koliševski pleaded to Boris III in a letter written in beautiful

⁴⁷ Blaže Koneski, *Po povod Najnoviot Napad na Našiot Jazik* [Regarding the Newest Attack on Our Language] (Skopje: National Front of Macedonia, 1948).

⁴⁸ Lazar Koliševski, *Aspects of the Macedonian Question* (Belgrade: Socialist Thought and Practice, 1980).

⁴⁹ Mihailo Apostolski, et al., eds. *Istorija na makedonskiot narod, vol. 1: Od predistoriskoto vreme do krajot na XVIII vek* [History of the Macedonian People, vol. 1: From the Prehistorical Period until the End of the 18th c.] (Skopje: INI, 1969).

⁵⁰ Dragni Dragnev, *Skopskata Ikona Blaže Koneski: Makedonski Lingvist ili Srâbski Politrabotnik* [The Skopje Icon Blaže Koneski: A Macedonian Linguist or a Serbian Propagandist] (Sofia: Macedonian Scientific Institute, 1998), 1-10.

⁵¹ Tzanko Serafimov, *Enciklopedichen Rechnik za Makedoniya I Makedonskite Raboti* [Encyclopedic dictionary for Macedonia and the Macedonian Matters] (Sofia: Orbel, 2004), 25-6.

Bulgarian, presenting himself as a good Bulgarian, who loved his Bulgarian homeland and respected his tzar. After the war, as president of Yugoslav Macedonia, he sent tens of thousands of Macedonians with Bulgarian national identity to the Yugoslav Gulags – Idrizovo and Goli Otok.⁵²

Most Greek and Bulgarian historians ignore the present reality in the FYROM, where it is evident that a Macedonian national identity does exist. Instead, all prominent Bulgarian and Greek historians dealing with the Macedonian Question are eager to prove that the Macedonian nation and language do not exist. They present a large number of historical documents starting from antiquity and ending in the mid-20th century to prove their points. Their usual conclusion is that, since there was no Macedonian national identity and language in the past, it is not possible for such entities to exist today.⁵³ Spyridon Sfetas, Kyriakos Kentrotis, Kosta Tzârnušanov, Bozhidar Dimitrov and other Greek and Bulgarian scholars from the old school believe that the nation is an organic and static entity that cannot change and evolve. When more liberal historians, such as Kostas Kazazis⁵⁴ and Anastasia Karakasidou⁵⁵ challenge these perceptions, they are boycotted and considered national traitors by both academics and the general public. My dissertation benefited tremendously from these historiographic debates.

⁵² Krste Crvenkovski and Slavko Milosavljevski, *Našiot Pogled za Vremeto na Koliševski* [Our View of Koliševski's Times] (Skopje: Mislà, 1996), 19-35.

⁵³ See: Spyridon Sfetas and Kyriakos Kentrotis, "Skopje: In Search of an Identity and International Recognition" In *Balkan Studies* (35), 1994, 337-77; Nicolaos K. Martis, *The Falsification of Macedonian History* (Athens: Athanassiades Bros., 1984; N.P. Andriotes, "History of the Name 'Macedonia'" In ----. *Macedonia: Past and Present* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1992); Konstantin Tzârnušanov, *Makedonizmât i sâprotivata na Makedoniya sreshu nego* [The Macedonianism and the Resistance in Macedonia Against It] (Sofia, 1992); Bozhidar Dimitrov, *The Ten Lies of Macedonianism* (Sofia: St. Clement of Ohrid, 2003).

⁵⁴ Kostas Kazazis, "Some Discordant Greek Voices on 'The Macedonian Question' " In Christina Kramer and Brian Cook, eds. *Guard the Work Well Bound: Proceedings of the Third North American-Macedonian Conference on Macedonian Studies* (Indiana Slavic Studies, Volume 10, 1999).

⁵⁵ Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*.

CHAPTER 1

THEORIES OF NATIONALISM AND NATION-BUILDING

1.1: Ethnic Nationalism

There are approximately 3,500 communities across the globe, which consider themselves to be ethnic groups.¹ Scholars, politicians and laymen often employ the terms ‘ethnos’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘ethnie’, ‘ethnic group’, ‘ethnonational group,’ ‘nation’, ‘ethnic nation’, ‘ethnic identity’, and ‘ethnic nationalism’ with ambiguity. Thus, it is appropriate to offer some definitions and explanations of these terms.

Until the 19th century, the Greeks used the terms *genos* and *ethnos* quite interchangeably to refer to a separate cultural group, tribe, nation, or even race. During the 19th century the term *ethnos* gained popularity and at present, the Greek word for nation is *ethnos*, even spelled *Ethnos*, when it is applied to the Greek nation in particular. By *ethnos*, the Greeks understand a group with significant common bonds, such as common history, culture, language, religion, ancestors, i.e. common blood and origin.² Thus, the Greek term *ethnos* passed into the other Indo-European languages with similar meanings, as well as the related terms ‘ethnicity’, ‘ethnie’, ‘ethnic group’, ‘ethnonational group’ and ‘ethnic nation.’ *Ethnie* is a French term, applied by Anthony D. Smith, who uses it as a synonym for ethnicity and ethnic group and defines it as a community with a collective name, common myth of descent, shared history, culture, territory, and sense of solidarity.³ This thesis will not employ the terms *ethnos* and *ethnie*, but ‘ethnic group’, ‘ethnonational group’ and ‘ethnic

¹ Henry Srebrnik, “Mini-Nationalism, Self-Determination and Micro-States in a Globalized World,” *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, 28 (2001), 2.

² Stephen G. Xydias. “Modern Greek Nationalism,” In Peter F. Sugar and I. J. Lederer, eds. *Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Seattle and London, 1969), 208-9.; Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 21.

³ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, 21-30.

nation' instead. There are many definitions of these terms, but for the purpose of this dissertation, an 'ethnicity' or 'ethnic group' will be used for a collectivity that has a real or (most often) imagined common origin/ancestors, common language, common territory, common culture, customs and common historical past, common belief that it belongs to a particular ethnic group and is identified by others as a distinct group. Furthermore, this group has a common name, an oral tradition, written records, intellectual/political leaders, and sometimes a common religion and common physical appearance.

The difference between 'ethnic group' and 'ethnonational group' and 'ethnic nation' can be very ambiguous and the proposed definitions by the various states around the world are oftentimes politically motivated. Most states in the world are multinational, i.e. states with many ethnic groups. Thus, it is not always politically beneficial for the state leaders to officially recognize the existence of X nations or even ethnonational groups within their borders that do not share the national identity, language, religion and culture of the dominant majority. In such cases, many states prefer to vaguely refer to their ethnic minorities as 'cultural groups/minorities', 'religious groups/minorities' or 'ethnic groups/minorities', but more rarely as 'ethnonational groups' or 'ethnic nations,' because many state governments are afraid that such recognition might encourage and trigger separatism and the disintegration of the state. An obvious case that illustrates this argument is the Kurdish ethnic group, which is not recognized as a nation by Turkey. The recent heated debate of 2006 in the Canadian Parliament over the issue, is Quebec a nation or not, also indicated how politically loaded the matter can be. This thesis, however, will not conform with political considerations, but rather with group size. Hence, an ethnic group will be considered also an ethnonational group if it is large enough and/or it is willing to constitute a nation-state and respectively an ethnic nation, whereas small groups of people that are not willing and/or are not capable of constituting a

separate nation-state due their size, economic viability or any other factor, and not less importantly do not perceive themselves as a nation, will be considered merely as ethnic groups. In brief, ethnonational groups are potential or actual nations. Thus, the Albanians, the Kurds, the Tibetans, the Catalans, the Flemish and numerous other groups are definitely not only ethnic groups but also ethnonational groups, whereas the Gypsies (Roma) constitute a number of ethnic groups with different cultures, customs, religions and languages, but even if they are lumped together into a single group, they still do not constitute an ethnonational group, because they do not perceive of themselves as a nation and they are not able to build a separate nation state due to their dispersal all over Europe and even North and South America.

The terms 'ethnic nation' or 'cultural nation' and 'civic' or 'political' nation are in fact inaccurate, because they do not reflect the complex reality of the states and their nations. They can be still used, however, if they are appropriately defined. These terms imply that a nation can be built solely on the basis of a common ethnicity or solely on the basis of a broad public agreement/consent and political contract, which would constitute the 'civic nation.' As Anthony D. Smith,⁴ Algis Prazauskas,⁵ Athena S. Leoussi⁶ and increasing number of other academics argue, there are no pure ethnic and pure civic nations. Naturally, most nations combine both ethnic and civic principles. Thus, relying on Anthony D. Smith's definition, 'nationalism' is: "an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity of a human population, some of whose members [preferably the

⁴ Anthony D. Smith, "The Nation Real or Imagined," In Edward Mortimer, ed. *People, Nation, and State: The Meaning of Ethnicity and Nationalism* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1999), 36-42.

⁵ Algis Prazauskas, *Ethnicity, Nationalism, Politics* (The Hague: Institute of Social Studies, 1998), 7-12.

⁶ Athena S. Leoussi, ed. *Encyclopedia of Nationalism* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2001), 60-70.

majority] conceive it to constitute an actual or potential nation.”⁷ On the other hand, using the excellent argument provided by Smith, a nation would be a: “human population, sharing an historic territory, common myths and memories, a mass, public culture, a single economy, and common rights and duties for all members.”⁸ Common citizenship, common political and economic interests can be also added to this definition. Smith, however, described the nations that are constituted primarily on an ethnic basis, but such definition does not characterize the nations that are constituted on the basis of political/civic consensus. Such nations that are constituted predominantly on a consensual basis will be defined as groups of people that share a common territory, a constitution that guarantees equal rights and responsibilities, common citizenship, a common economy, they identify themselves as a nation and are identified by others as such, and they share at least one of the following features: a common language, a common historical past, or common religion. The nations that are built primarily on the ethnic principle will be called ‘ethnic nations,’ but this will not imply that they are solely ethno-centric, whereas the nations that are built primarily on a political contract between various ethnic groups will be called ‘civic nations,’ which will not imply that they do not include ethnic features.

There is a large debate in the historiography of nationalism on whether nations are a modern phenomenon or are a product of pre-modern and even ancient times, and is their common origin genuine or constructed? In spite of the examples of ancient Israel, Greece and medieval Switzerland, most nations are a modern phenomenon. The argument about the real or imagined common origin of ethnic groups, however, is irrelevant. Ultimately, it does

⁷ Smith, “The Nation Real or Imagined,” 37.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

not matter if the ethnicities are based on a pre-modern ethnic core as A.D. Smith,⁹ Van Den Berghe¹⁰, and other primordialists claim or they are united by “a common error about their ancestry and a common dislike of their neighbours,”¹¹ as Karl Deutsch half-jokingly notes. It does not matter if these ethnic groups are mobilized by strong regions as instrumentalists such as Hechter claims¹², by early medieval nobles as the neo-romanticist Armstrong¹³ claims, a modern product of social and political constructions as Gellner¹⁴ and Anderson¹⁵ claim, or they are a product of fabricated legends like that of William Tell, as Fahrni¹⁶ argues.

All successful ethnic nations use the argument of common origin as one of the pillars of their national identity. It is irrelevant if this origin is real or imagined if it provides a stable national identity for the particular nation. Certainly, there was a lot of myth invention, state intervention and propaganda and intellectual identity construction in the process of mass nation-building after the French Revolution. All invention theories, however, fail to answer the crucial question posed by Prazauskas: “what determines the success or failure of nationalist appeal?”¹⁷ Other interesting questions are: why were the Corsicans, Basques, Bretons and Flemings not assimilated if everything is a matter of print capitalism, mass communication, education and propaganda? Why did the Serbs succeed in constructing Montenegrin, Bosnian, and Macedonian national identities but failed to impose a Serbian identity in pre-WW II Vardar Macedonia, or even a robust Yugoslav identity after WW II?

⁹ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*.

¹⁰ Van den Berghe, *The Ethnic Phenomenon*.

¹¹ Karl Deutsch, *Nationalism and Its Alternatives* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 3.

¹² Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism. The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536-1966* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

¹³ John Armstrong. *Nations Before Nationalism*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

¹⁴ Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.

¹⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

¹⁶ Dieter Fahrni, *An Outline History of Switzerland* (Zurich: Pro Helvetia, 1987).

¹⁷ *Ethnicity, Nationalism, Politics*, 7.

Hence, it is hard to believe that all European people until the French Revolution were a *tabula rasa* that could be molded in any nation. Certainly, nationalist propaganda played a much larger role than the 'natural bonds', but the pre-existing dialects/languages, religions and other factors also were taken into account by the emerging nationalists in the 19th century. It is also very likely that nations did not emerge at once but gradually in stages. The Czech historian Miroslav Hroch argues that nations went through three phases: "Phase A, the Learned Interest, Phase B, the National Agitation and Phase C, the Mass Movement."¹⁸ The model of Hroch is particularly useful for nationalism of small ethnic groups and this dissertation will employ Hroch's model to describe the nation-building process in the Balkans.

The need for a common territory for the successful development and unity of a nation is indisputable. The lack of a common territory leads to isolation, regionalism, weakening ties between the regions and potentially to separatism. Martinique and Guadeloupe are good examples that illustrate this argument, since both islands are officially part of France, proclaimed as overseas departments in 1946.¹⁹

A common language is also a crucial element to every ethnicity, since it provides a common medium of communication and interaction and it 'proves' that the group has a common culture and common origin. The vital role of the common language, however, makes it an important target of construction. As Hobsbawm points out: "modern languages are [...] almost always semi-artificial constructs and occasionally, like modern Hebrew,

¹⁸ Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe. A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1985), 5-20.

¹⁹ William S.F. Miles, "Mitterand in the Caribbean: Socialism (?) Comes to Martinique," *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Autumn, 1985), 63-79.

virtually invented.”²⁰ By constructs, the thesis author does not understand, however, that a group of Romance language speakers can be persuaded that their “real” language is Slavic, but certainly the boundaries within the same language group (i.e. Germanic, Slavic) or subgroup (i.e. South Slavic group) can be unclear and disputable. In fact, dialects can be an ethnic marker, e.g. an ethnic Brazilian would always prefer Brazilian Portuguese to European Portuguese. In some cases, the languages are indeed very similar or even virtually identical with another language, but bear different names, due to political considerations. The numerous examples include: Hindi/Urdu, Moldovan/Romanian, Serbian/ Croatian/ Bosnian/ Montenegrin, Bulgarian/Macedonian, etc.

A common historical past often includes an ancient origin of the group, a golden age, historical myths and memories, a certain self-image, which is strongly positive and it is usually accompanied by a negative image for the neighbouring groups, which are usually ‘treacherous’ and ‘barbarians’ and thus, they distinguish themselves from their neighbours. Even the Native groups in North America have a similar attitude. Terms such as Innu, Inuit, Anishinabeg (the Algonquin name for themselves) mean ‘people’ or ‘real people’, ‘our people’, whereas the Algonquins refer to their Iroquois neighbours as ‘real adders’ or the Ojibway call the Sioux ‘little snakes.’²¹ Similar observations led Morgenthau to conclude that the paradox of double-standard nationalism is that: “a critique of someone else’s nationalism is never taken to apply to one’s own.”²² Thus, the positive effect of myth-making of a glorious historical past and positive self-image is that it brings the ethnic groups together, but the negative result might be national stereotypes and potential ethnic conflict with the neighbouring groups.

²⁰ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, 54.

²¹ Prazauskas, *Ethnicity, Nationalism, Politics*, 2.

²² Jane K. Cowan, *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference* (Pluto Press, 200), 7-8.

The common name that unites the ethnic group should always be preserved by all members of the group, because if it changes, it might lead to the demise of that group. Some ethnic groups negotiated a change of their ethnic name among themselves to remove negative connotations associated with their previous name, e.g. Roma/Romany instead of the old term Gypsies. Other groups changed their name to reflect a new political reality, e.g. the “Canadiens” of Quebec turned into “Quebecois” in the 1960s. Such name change might split the group as it is evident with the French Canadians. Presently, the Quebecois consider themselves as a separate ethnic group from the other French Canadians in Canada.

Common economic and political interests are often underestimated and usually not included in the definitions of a nation, but this historian believes that they are vital for the survival and unity of the nation. Conflicting economic and political interests keep China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong apart. The continuous separation of one ethnicity and the occupation of its territory by other states might lead to alienation and the emergence of a new ethnic identity. A number of examples can illustrate the complexity of such development. Taiwan was populated by Chinese from the coastal provinces of China and yet it was under Japanese colonial rule from 1895 to 1945. In 1945, it was returned to China, and yet after 1949 when Chiang Kai-shek retreated there, the unity with mainland China was severed again. As a result, the residents of Taiwan are facing a national identity crisis. There are Taiwanese residents who support complete independence from China (Taiwanese nationalists), there are others who are proponents of unification with China (Chinese nationalists), as well as Taiwanese, who have a fluid, insecure, and confused national identity, accepting both their Chinese ethnic origin and the present political reality of de

facto Taiwanese independence from China.²³ The situation in Moldova is similar. A former Romanian province that was also a Russian province and a Soviet republic, Moldova is experiencing a national identity crisis. An increasing number of Moldovans prefer to declare Romanian ethnicity on censuses, despite government pressure. Also, since 1993, the Moldovans use the Romanian alphabet, which replaced the Cyrillic alphabet, imposed by the Soviets to counter Romanian irredentist claims. This insecurity of the Moldovan national identity, predicts Prazauskas, may lead Moldovans to join the Romanian nation once again.²⁴ The case of Montenegro is another Balkan example of an emerging ethnicity. The Serbian national revival was started in Montenegro in the 19th century and most residents of the new country still have a Serbian identity. And yet, economic and political considerations encouraged the Montenegrin government to secede from Yugoslavia and to form an independent country after a referendum in 2006 with the hope that this will speed up its membership in the EU and thus improve its economic situation. Despite the belief of most Montenegrin residents, however, that they speak Serbian, the Montenegrin government wants to call the official language in the country Montenegrin and is attempting to introduce legislation that will add three additional letters to the current Serbian Cyrillic alphabet.²⁵

The situation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is also very fluid. The Macedonian government is attempting to build a nation and national identity on a predominantly ethnic basis, but this is not possible since it contains a 30% minority – Albanians. There is also a large debate in FYROM about the roots of the Macedonian nation. Do these roots go back to ancient Macedonia of Phillip and Alexander the Great, are they in

²³ Timothy Ka-Ying-Wong, "Dissolution and Reconstruction of National Identity: The Experience of Subjectivity in Taiwan," *Nations and Nationalism* 4 (2), 1998, 247-72.

²⁴ Prazauskas, *Ethnicity, Nationalism, Politics*, 9.

²⁵ Filip Kovačević, "Montenegro and the Politics of Postcommunist Transition: 1990 to 2006" *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Volume 18 (3) Summer 2007, 72-93.

the Slavic tribes that came in the 6th-7th century, or maybe the beginning is the 19th century, to 1903 Ilinden or even to 1944? An increasing number of FYROM citizens are also applying for Bulgarian citizenship. In fact, the former prime minister of FYROM, Ljubčo Georgievski, received Bulgarian citizenship in 2006 on the basis of his application, in which he declared that his parents are ethnic Bulgarians.

Religion might also play an important role in nation-building, but it is not always a factor. In Ireland and Bosnia, religion played and plays a very important nation-building role but in Germany both Catholics and Protestants are part of the German nation, as well as Muslims and Christians in Albania. Thus, ethnicity is indeed a very complex phenomenon and it is difficult to set universal criteria that are valid for all ethnonational groups.

1.2: Civic Nationalism

The concept of civic nationalism was formulated by Hans Kohn, who claimed that there is “Western” nationalism, which is liberal, democratic and civic, and “Eastern” nationalism, which is undemocratic and ethnic. Civic nationalism was a product of the state and citizenship, according to Kohn.²⁶ The Spanish scholar Andres De Blas refers to this type of nationalism as political, for Renaut it is voluntarist,²⁷ and for Leoussi, it is territorial nationalism.²⁸ Regardless of the different descriptions of the phenomenon, its definitions are quite similar and Leoussi concludes that: “historic territory, legal-political unity, fraternal

²⁶ Hans Kohn, *Prelude to Nation-States: The French and German Experience, 1789-1815* (Princeton, N.J: Van Nostrand, 1967), 55-65.

²⁷ Michael Keating, *Nations against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 3.

²⁸ Leoussi, ed. *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, 63.

citizenship and mass civic culture are the defining features of territorial nationalism.”²⁹

Guibernau argues that ‘legitimate’ states are those in which the state corresponds with the nation, whereas ‘illegitimate’ states are those that include different nations or parts of nations.³⁰ An increasing number of scholars, however, including Tim Nieguth³¹ and David Brown³² challenge the dichotomy of ethnic versus civic nationalism. Considering that virtually all states in the world have some sort of ethnic or religious minorities, all states should be described as ‘illegitimate’ if the thesis of Guibernau is universally applied. And yet, there are states that are predominantly based on a civic/political basis, rather than on ethnic principles. Such countries include Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, the USA, etc.

David Brown challenges the idea that civic nations are always based on liberal ideas and Lockean theories of political contract and voluntary consent by the members of the nation.³³ The only Balkan state that attempted to build a civic nation – Yugoslavia – as well as the Eurasian giant civic state – the U.S.S.R. – can hardly be referred to as liberal states, considering how many people had to be sent to gulags in order to ‘persuade’ them that they were Yugoslavs and Soviets. In the west, however, civic nations are usually based on a broad public consensus and a political contract.

Civic nationalism is a different mode of nation-building, compared to ethnic nationalism, because it revolves around the state and its institutions and not around the common ethnicity of its members. In fact, two, three or more ethnic groups can be bound together by a common territory, state institutions, a constitution and citizenship that

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁰ Montserrat Guibernau. *Nationalisms: The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, M.A: Polity Press, 1996), 59.

³¹ Tim Nieguth, “Beyond Dichotomy: Concepts of the Nation and the Distribution of Membership,” *Nations and Nationalism*, 5 (2), 1999, 155-73.

³² David Brown, “Are there Good and Bad Nationalisms?”, 281.

³³ *Ibid.*, 282-302.

guarantee equal rights for all members of the nation. As the Turkish sociologist Gülaip Haldun points out: “The concept of citizenship has two distinct aspects. First and foremost, it defines a new politically constructed identity. As a system of closure, citizenship specifically identifies who is in, as a member of the national community and who is out. Secondly, citizenship formally endows and burdens the members of the community with a set of rights and obligations.”³⁴

The main distinguishing feature of civic nationalism, however, is the individual choice that it allows. In fact, many Aboriginal societies in North America managed to combine the principles of ethnic and civic nationalism, giving a free choice to their captives to become members of their tribes and, as a result there were blond and even Afro-American members of the Cherokees, the Seminoles, as well as the Hurons, who often became members of their fiercest enemy tribe – the Mohawks.³⁵ Most ethnic groups, however, do not allow their members to have a free choice. Usually, every member of the ethnic group is bound by their ethnicity since the day of their birth. Rejection of this ethnonational identity is usually considered as treason to the nation and the perception is that even if someone changes their national identity, they continue to be part of their original ethnic group, i.e. as the old saying goes “blood is thicker than water.” According to the civic nationalism concept, free choice is guaranteed, since representatives of all ethnic groups that build the state negotiate a political contract for their unity. After this contract, they agreed to perceive themselves and to be perceived by others as one nation of Swiss, Americans, or Belgians, despite their ethnic descent.

³⁴ Gülaip Haldun, ed. *Citizenship and Ethnic Conflict: Challenging the Nation-State* (London-New York: Routledge, 2006).

³⁵ Daniel Richter, “War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 1983, 528-59; Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Southeast* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).

In reality, perhaps only Switzerland is close to this pure civic nation model. The Americans do not regard the new immigrants automatically as part of the American nation, and the politicizing of ethnicity creates rifts in the civic national bonds of Canada and Belgium. Mass civic political culture is crucial for the success of civic nationalism and the U.S. institutions persistently promote a strong attachment to the U.S.A. and American symbols. And yet, the common national language usually facilitates the mass culture, whereas multilingual countries seem to experience problems with sustaining a common national identity and to face separatist trends, e.g. Canada and Belgium. Yet, Switzerland, which has four national languages (German, French, Italian and Romansch) seems to have built a successful civic nation. According to Andreas Wimmer, the success of Swiss nationalism is due to its “inclusive trans-ethnic form where the networks of civil society organizations are dense enough to allow the new political elite [...] to legitimize their rule and to mobilize political support without having to resort to an ethnic constituency and the practice of ethnic favouritism and clientelism.”³⁶ The main distinguishing characteristic of the Swiss model is that its linguistic and religious borders do not coincide with its cantonal boundaries. This structure allows German-speaking Catholic cantons to have more in common with their Francophone Catholic neighbours than with another Swiss German Protestant canton. In recent years, however, the Francophone cantons seem to have united themselves in an entity called *Romandie* and to demand EU membership for Switzerland in opposition to the isolationist Swiss German cantons.³⁷ This new development might disrupt the political and ethnonational balance of Switzerland in the future. The Swiss model,

³⁶ Wimmer, *Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict*, 241.

³⁷ Bruno Schoch, *Switzerland: A Model for Solving Nationality Conflicts* (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute, 2000), 12-17.

however, cannot be applied universally as a panacea. Neither ethnic, nor civic, nationalism provides a universal recipe for the success of nations and their states.

1.3: Cultural and Regional Identities

Cultural and regional identities are sub-national identities that make people conscious of their distinctiveness, due to a different language or dialect, religion, historical development, economy, political factors, or simply administrative division. Thus, using the definition of Athena Leoussi, regionalism can be described as a “set of movements demanding the economic, political and cultural autonomy of certain areas or ‘regions,’ which form part of one or more states.”³⁸

Identity may be defined as the distinctive characteristic belonging to any given individual, or shared by all members of a particular social category or group. The term comes from the Latin noun *identitas*, which is derived from of the Latin adjective *idem*, meaning “the same.”³⁹

There has been a revival of regional and cultural identities in the last few decades. Regional identities might be genuinely based on cultural attributes, such as religion, language/dialect, but they can also be based on non-cultural geographic and economic territories. There are numerous culturally based regional identities: Quebec, Flanders, Catalonia, Ticino, Scotland, Corsica, the Basque Country, Brittany, Tibet, Punjab, Nunavut, Chechnya, and Kurdistan are few examples. In all these cases, a different language, religion, customs, culture and history, as well as in some cases a level of political and economic

³⁸ Leoussi, ed. *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, 263.

³⁹ Kath Woodward, *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 6-8.

autonomy (Quebec, Flanders, Catalonia) are strong factors that reinforce the local cultural identity.

The consolidation and strengthening of a cultural identity might be a result of fierce persecution. This was the case with the Jews in Nazi Germany, the ethnic Turks in 1980s communist Bulgaria, and the Serbian ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims. It may also result from discrimination and rejection from the mainstream ethnonational group, e.g. the Gypsies across Eastern Europe and to some extent the Slavic population of Greece.

Historic developments and particularly the division of a country among different empires or states might also lead to regionalization. A classic example is Poland, which was divided between the Habsburg Empire, Germany and Russia from 1772 to 1918. The fluidity of boundaries and the feudal system that essentially divided Europe into principalities, dukedoms and counties also had a tremendous effect on the cultural, religious and ethnonational development of the Old World. Moravians still have a very strong regional identity even if their overall national identity is Czech. They are proud of their history, culture and specific dialect.⁴⁰ The same trend is valid for many other historic regions – Silesia, Dobrudja, Bavaria, Andalusia, etc.

Regional identities might appear due to economic disparity. The historic division of Italy into numerous states, combined with the extreme economic contrast of the North versus the South is still quite evident. Lombardy, in particular, raises its voice primarily on an economic basis and demands more autonomy and detachment from the other northern regions of Italy.⁴¹ The Maritimes and the Canadian West, and Western Australia are other

⁴⁰ András Róna-Tas, *Hungarians & Europe in the Early Middle Ages: An Introduction to Early Hungarian History* (Budapest: Central European University, 1999), 10-25.

⁴¹ Dwayne Woods, "The Crisis of Center-Periphery Integration in Italy and the Rise of Regional Populism: The Lombard League," *Comparative Politics*, 27 (2), (Jan. 1995), 187-203.

examples of regions with primarily economic motivation and dissatisfaction with the central government.

Thus, as Homi Bhabha concludes: “national culture is neither unified nor unitary, it contains *others* within.”⁴² These *others* might cause conflicts and crises but their existence is inevitable in democratic states.

1.4: Diaspora Nationalism and Multiple Identities

The term *diaspora* originally referred to the dispersion of the Jews by the Babylonians, but its modern use includes any ethnic group that lives voluntarily or not in another country.⁴³ Gabriel Sheffer defines modern diasporas as “ethnic minority groups of migrant origins residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin – their homelands.”⁴⁴ In order to survive, the diasporas should be resistant to assimilation. In order to secure their continuity, the diaspora organizations and leaders promote perpetual cultural, economic and sometimes political exchanges with the homeland.⁴⁵ Language, history, and religion are key elements for the ethnic pride and identity of virtually every diaspora. Despite predictions from both the right and the left that diasporas are a transitory phenomenon and will eventually disappear into mainstream society, diaspora nationalism continues to be visible across the globe. In fact, as Sheffer points out, some ethnic groups that were losing their cohesiveness and connections

⁴² Bhabha, Homi, “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation,” in Homi Bhabha, ed. *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), 292.

⁴³ Leo Louis Snyder, *Global Mini-Nationalisms: Autonomy or Independence* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), XV.

⁴⁴ Gabriel Sheffer, ed. *Modern Diasporas in International Politics* (London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

with the old country have revived their interest and links to the homeland. Sheffer referred to the Polish Catholic community in the USA in the 1980s as an example.⁴⁶

This diaspora revival can be explained in a number of ways. Even multiethnic countries such as Canada, the USA and Australia often discouraged the explicit demonstration of other cultures and languages, different from the dominant mainstream cultures and languages. Public pressure was also very strong. An immigrant woman, quoted by Lillian Petroff, mentioned that, while she was walking with her mother on Queen Street in 1930s Toronto and they were discussing something in their native Macedonian dialect, a man stopped them and said to her mother: “Why don’t you damn foreigners learn to speak English or get out of the country?”⁴⁷ As late as the 1960s, the public use of a language different from English or French was frowned upon in both Canada and the USA. The situation, however, radically improved with the introduction of the Canadian official multiculturalism policy in 1971, followed by Australia, as well as the increasing toleration of other cultures and languages in the USA.

The 1980s and 1990s also brought increasing resistance to Communism in Eastern Europe and its collapse. World attention was focused on the region and the political changes that led to a relaxed regime, and to travelling and various exchange programs. This encouraged the revival of various eastern European diasporas, which actively followed events in their respective homelands. Newly-formed countries, such as Armenia, which had not existed for centuries, as well as Slovakia, Croatia and the FYROM, provoked great enthusiasm among their ethnic communities abroad. In fact, it is widely accepted that the biggest nationalists do not live in their home countries, but usually reside thousands of

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴⁷ Petroff, *Settlers and Sojourners*, 117.

kilometers away. It is easier to spot Polish flag stickers on cars in Ottawa or Toronto than in Warsaw or Krakow. The nostalgia, the distance and the idealized image of the homeland, due to the temporal and spatial gap, as well as the need for a solid ethnic identity that would boost the pride of the ethnic community members with their cultural, historic and linguistic heritage, are factors that facilitate the revival of many ethnic diasporas.⁴⁸

As Michael Dahan and Gabriel Sheffer point out, modern technologies also shrink the distance between the diaspora and the homeland. Cheap telephone calls, shorter and cheaper flights, satellite television, international media and the internet allow the creation of real and virtual communities in which the differentiation between centre and periphery starts to lose its importance.⁴⁹ Financial transfers from diasporic communities to recipients in the homeland also have a great impact on fostering a strong national identity. Such financial flows might also influence important political decisions and civil wars in the home country, as Yossi Shain and Martin Sherman point out.⁵⁰

In fact, there is a general identity crisis in many western societies and even third and fourth generation Irish Americans or Ukrainian Canadians are reclaiming their ethnic heritage. As, Loring Danforth concludes, many people “are struggling to construct a coherent sense of themselves.”⁵¹ And, since the New World allows a relatively free choice in picking an ethnic identity, as Mary Waters observes, identities might change both through the life span of the people and across generations. People who are fourth generation in America,

⁴⁸ Gabriel Sheffer, ed. *Modern Diasporas*, 3-25.

⁴⁹ Michael Dahan and Gabriel Sheffer, “Ethnic Groups and Distance Shrinking Communication Technologies,” *Nationalism and Ethnic politics*, 7 (1), 2001, 85-9.

⁵⁰ Yossi Shain and Martin Sherman, “Diasporic Transnational Financial Flows and Their Impact on National Identity,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 7 (4), 2001, 1-36.

⁵¹ Loring Danforth, “How Can a Woman Give Birth to One Greek and One Macedonian? The Construction of National Identity among Immigrants to Australia from Northern Greece,” In Jane K. Cowan, *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference*, 100.

might rediscover and reclaim the identities of their grandparents.⁵² Such people, however, might not join an ethnic diaspora, because most Portuguese Americans do not speak or even understand Portuguese and this is not well accepted by the nationalists in the community. On the other hand, most communities in Canada and the USA operate bilingual and even trilingual cultural organizations and ethnic media, because they realize that if they want to attract a larger membership and public interest, they should cater to the younger third and fourth generations, who very rarely are proficient in the language of the home country.⁵³

The modern web of complex identities and constant negotiation of identities with the “others” in western societies leads to the existence of multilayered and multifaceted personal identities that include gender, professional, religious, regional, ethnic and national identities, i.e. multiple identities. An increasing number of social scientists, including Homi Bhabha,⁵⁴ Kath Woodward,⁵⁵ Gail Lewis and Ann Phoenix,⁵⁶ argue that ethnic identity is just one of the many identities that modern people have and it is not always and not necessarily the most important identity. Not every one sees the need to define themselves primarily on ethnic grounds and this is one of the reasons that very often the active participants in any given diaspora, who lead the ethnocultural life of the community, are a minority, merely a part of the total number of the diaspora members.

Many modern diasporas are thriving in their host countries and attempt to influence cultural and political life, not only within their own community, but in their host country and their native land. Democratic societies facilitate the emergence of multiple identities and

⁵² Mary Waters, *Ethnic Options: Choosing Identities in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 30-70.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 30-70.

⁵⁴ Bhabha, “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation.”

⁵⁵ Kath Woodward, *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁵⁶ Gail Lewis and Ann Phoenix, “Race, Ethnicity and Identity,” In Kath Woodward, *Questioning Identity*, 115-50.

modern technologies allow both large and small ethnic diasporas to survive and keep in contact with their native land.

1.5: Linguistic Policies: A Global Perspective

The notion of language as a central element in nation-building is widely accepted in the Balkans and, therefore, the status of Macedonian as a language is fiercely contested. A short review of linguistic problems and policies in different parts of the world, however, indicates that the linguistic situation in the Balkans, and particularly in the FYROM, is not unique.

The 18th century German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder considered nations to be in their core language groups and therefore, according to Anthony D. Smith, Herder influenced nationalists in other countries to perceive nationalism as a linguistic movement.⁵⁷ In many cases, however, nationalist leaders of small ethnic groups reached a similar conclusion without any reference to Herder. The 19th century Irish nationalist, Thomas Davis maintained that: “a people without a language of its own is only half nation.”⁵⁸ One of the mottoes of Breton nationalists is: “without Breton, there is no Brittany,”⁵⁹ whereas the speakers of Manx – the language of the small Isle of Man, go even further: “no language, no country.”⁶⁰

A large number of states saw in language a visible marker of difference that could secure the existence of the nation and its prominent place on the international scene. The

⁵⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Duckworth, 1971), 182.

⁵⁸ Leoussi, *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, 171.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 171.

codification of a language is not merely a linguistic act, but also, almost always, a political decision. Thus, it is necessary to define languages in both linguistic and political terms.

This chapter will employ the terms dialect, dialect continuum, language, pluricentric language (diasystem), *ausbau* language, *abstand* language, *dach* language and semi-language (quasi-language). Linguistically, a dialect is usually a non written regional variety of a language, which is mutually intelligible with the standard literary language to a large extent. A range of similar dialects form a *dialect continuum* in which the dialects spoken in a geographic area gradually decrease their mutual intelligibility with increasing distance.⁶¹ To borrow from the terminology of the German sociolinguist Heinz Kloss, who introduced the terms *abstand*, *ausbau* and *dach* languages, an *abstand* language, from the German word for distance, is a “linguistic variety, which is perceived as being a language in its own right by virtue of its linguistic distance from all other varieties.”⁶² *Abstand* languages have clearly defined dialect continuums, e.g. Basque vs. Spanish or German vs. Italian, e.g. When a linguistic variety, which is very different from the officially accepted standard language is considered a dialect rather than a language, the considerations are more political than linguistic and such language with mutually unintelligible dialects within it is defined as a *dach* language by Heinze Kloss, e.g. French and Occitan dialect/language, Italian and Sardinian dialect/language or the Arabic language.⁶³ On the other hand, an *ausbau* language, from the German word for extension, is a “linguistic variety, which is considered to constitute a language in its own right for cultural and political reasons.”⁶⁴ Such languages do not have clearly defined dialect continuums and are very similar to one or more of the

⁶¹ Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Variation and Change* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 115.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 115.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

neighbouring languages, e.g. the Scandinavian languages. This development, caused by political considerations led the famous Yiddish linguist Max Weinrich to define language as “a dialect with an army and a navy.”⁶⁵

The term *pluricentric*, again developed by Kloss, refers to languages with several centres, each providing a national variety with its own codified norms, e.g. British English and American English.⁶⁶ These different norms form the same *diasystem*, i.e. a language with two or more standard forms. In some cases, for political reasons, a national norm of a pluricentric language, called by Aleksandr D. Shveitser⁶⁷ a *standard language variant*, might be called a different name than the name of the generic pluricentric language in order to be considered a different *ausbau* language, primarily for political reasons, e.g. Karelian and Finnish, Moldovan and Romanian, Urdu and Hindi, etc. The Irish linguist Mairead Nic Craith defines such languages as Moldovan, Karelian, Taiwanese, and Bosnian as *semi-languages*. Nic Craith regards these language variants as “more than a dialect but less than a language.”⁶⁸ This thesis will employ a similar term – a *quasi-language*.

Politically, languages can be divided into two main groups – languages with official standards imposed by the nation-state or intellectual elite in an attempt to unify their ethnonational group with one single standard written form of communication, and languages or most often quasi-languages that were imposed on the particular ethnonational group by a group foreign to their state. Most standard language forms across the globe are imposed by the local elites or nation-states, but some languages, particularly quasi-languages were imposed on certain ethnic groups by foreign states to achieve better control of the local

⁶⁵ Lori Repetti, “Teaching about the Other Italian Languages: Dialectology in the Italian Curriculum,” *Italica*, 73 (4) Winter, 1996, 509.

⁶⁶ Clyne, *Pluricentric Languages*, 1.

⁶⁷ Aleksandr D. Shveitser, *Contemporary Sociolinguistics* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1986), 20.

⁶⁸ Mairead Nic Craith, *Europe and the Politics of Language: Citizens, Migrants and Outsiders* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2001), 107.

population and to avoid irredentist claims by neighbouring states, e.g. the Russians imposed the so called Karelian language on the Finnish population of Soviet Karelia.⁶⁹

It has to be noted, however, that quasi-languages cannot be referred to as ‘artificial languages,’ a term that becomes increasingly popular in the Balkans. In their essence, quasi-languages are socio-political constructs, similar to any other linguistic standard. As Dennis Ager points out: “artificial languages, precisely because they are artificial, have no social or political associations, so they should be acceptable to all.”⁷⁰ Esperanto is the most successful genuinely artificial language that fits this definition. It was invented in Poland in 1887 by Ludwig Lazarus Zamenhof with the idea that it would become an international language unattached to any nation and thus, belonging to the whole world.⁷¹

A number of languages have been contested by both linguists and nationalists around the globe with various arguments aimed at proving that certain language varieties belong to the same pluricentric diasystem or quite the contrary – they are two different even if closely related *ausbau* languages. Thus, it is worth reviewing some of the most intriguing cases.

There is no doubt that Portuguese is a pluricentric language with two national standards, those of Portugal and Brazil. According to some linguists, including Moutinho L. Castro, Inês Duarte and Isabel Leiria, however, the Portuguese language has a third standard – Galician, a language variety closely related to Portuguese and spoken in northwestern Spain.⁷² In fact, historically the language was called *galego-português* (Galician-Portuguese) and it originated in the early medieval Kingdom of Galicia that included modern Galicia and northern Portugal. It united Portugal and Galicia until the mid-14th century, when the

⁶⁹ Paul M. Austin, “Soviet Karelian: The Language that Failed,” *Slavic Review*, 51 (1), 1992, 16-35.

⁷⁰ Dennis Ager, *Language, Community and the State* (Exeter, UK: Intellect, 1997), 84.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 84-5.

⁷² Baxter, Alan N, “Portuguese as a Pluricentric Language, In Michael Clyne, *Pluricentric Languages*, 11.

language was split. Portuguese continued its literary development, whereas Galician had become reduced primarily to oral use. Despite the isolated development of Galician for six centuries, it is still about 85% intelligible to the Portuguese, particularly to those who speak the northern Portuguese dialects. The government of Galicia, however, as well as the majority of non-Portuguese linguists, consider Galician as a distinct language.⁷³

The Dutch language is also a pluricentric language with contested linguistic boundaries. It is the official language of three countries – the Netherlands, Belgium and Surinam. Despite the official position of the government of the Belgian region of Flanders that Flemish is a linguistic variety of Dutch, many Flemish nationalists consider Flemish a separate language and in Belgium the widely used name of the language is *Vlaams* (Flemish).⁷⁴ While there is a general agreement among linguists that the matter with Flemish is more political than linguistic, the status of Afrikaans is contested. Afrikaans is based on Holland and Zeeland dialects from the 16th and 17th centuries, brought by the Dutch settlers to South Africa. Bruce Donaldson considers Afrikaans as a standard variety of Dutch, since it is “easily understood by speakers of Dutch, particularly in its written form.”⁷⁵ Geerts, however, does not consider Afrikaans as a national variety of Dutch, but rather as a separate language.⁷⁶

The Scandinavian linguistic situation is particularly interesting, since it can be compared to the Balkan linguistic development. In purely linguistic terms, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish are very close to each other. In fact, speakers of the three languages

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁷⁴ G. Geerts, “Is Dutch a Pluricentric Language?” In Clyne, *Pluricentric Languages*, 78-9.

⁷⁵ Bruce C. Donaldson, *Dutch: A Linguistic History of Holland and Belgium* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), 3.

⁷⁶ Geerts, “Is Dutch a Pluricentric Language?,” 72.

can easily understand each other in a three-way conversation.⁷⁷ Politically, however, the speakers of the three countries are not ready to consider the three languages as parts of the same Scandinavian diasystem, because as Dennis Ager points out, such development would “reduce the status of their ‘national’ language to that of a mere dialect.”⁷⁸ Due to the four centuries of Danish rule over Norway (until 1814), followed by a union with Sweden until 1905, Norway developed two official language standards of the Norwegian language-*bokmål* (book language) and *nynorsk* (New Norwegian). The *bokmål* employs Danish orthography and to a large extent Danish vocabulary but pronounced with Norwegian sounds. Presently, it is the most popular linguistic standard and it also used to be the language of the Norwegian elite during the Danish domination of the country. The second linguistic standard *nynorsk* is used by about 10 percent of the population and it is based on the rural western Norwegian dialects. Ivar Aasen constructed *nynorsk* in the late 19th century as an alternative to the Danish language.⁷⁹ The American linguist John H. McWhorter argues that “what is today “Norwegian” [*bokmål*] was just the way they speak Danish in Norway until Norway broke with Denmark in 1814.”⁸⁰ To make the Scandinavian linguistic situation even more complicated, Swedish is also a pluricentric language, since it is the official language of Sweden and one of the two official languages of Finland. Thus, there are two national standards of Swedish: Sweden-Swedish (*sverigesvenska*) and Finland-Swedish (*finlandsvenska*).⁸¹ Mikael Reuter also points out that “the whole basis of Finland-Swedish pronunciation differs greatly from Swedish in Sweden [...] and nobody would try to imitate

⁷⁷ Ager, *Language Community and the State*, 30.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁸⁰ John H. McWhorter, *The Power of Babel: a Natural History of Language* (Basingstoke: W.H. Freeman, 2001), 69.

⁸¹ Mikael Reuter, “Swedish as a Pluricentric Language,” In Clyne, *Pluricentric Languages*, 105.

Sweden-Swedish pronunciation.”⁸² Thus, Finland-Swedish standard is an important marker to the group identity of the Finland-Swedes.

It is necessary to mention the case of Hindi-Urdu, which are considered as two distinct *ausbau* languages for political reasons. Linguistically, however, according to a large majority of linguists, Hindi and Urdu form the dialect continuum of the same pluricentric language.⁸³

German and English are also interesting cases of pluricentric languages with a number of quite different national standards, and yet the differences between the national linguistic varieties of Arabic are even greater. The existence of Arabic as a pluricentric language rather than its division into a number of *ausbau* languages is more dictated by political and religious considerations for the unity of the Muslims than by the linguistic reality. Hassan R.S. Abd-el-Jawad agrees that the numerous Arabic linguistic variants can easily split the common classic Arabic language into a number of new languages. He notes, however that “with the existence of powerful religious feelings in the Arab world as well as the Muslim world, this is a danger, which nobody can afford or dare to risk.”⁸⁴ Thus, the Arabic language can be defined more as a *dach* language, i.e. a language that contains a number of *ausbau* languages in itself, rather than as a pluricentric language.

The French language is a wonderful example of a both a *dach* language and a pluricentric language that was politically imposed across the territory of France. Before the French Revolution of 1789, the people living in the French kingdom used at least thirty different languages and dialects. The kings and the aristocracy tolerated the status quo and there was no pressure on the inhabitants of the various provinces to adopt the elite Parisian

⁸² *Ibid.*, 105.

⁸³ Hans R. Dua, “Hindi-Urdu as a Pluricentric Language,” In Clyne, *Pluricentric Languages*, 381-400.

⁸⁴ Hassan R.S. Abd-el-Jawad, “Is Arabic a Pluricentric Language,” In Clyne, *Pluricentric Languages*, 261-2.

French as their only instrument of communication. The French Revolution radically changed this situation of sublime linguistic freedom. As part of the centralization of the country, and in order to achieve the equality and unity of *la nation française*, the new revolutionary government imposed the standard Parisian French on all inhabitants of France. All other languages and dialects were simply outlawed, regardless of the fact that Provençal, Basque and Corsican can hardly be considered mere dialects.⁸⁵ French, on the other hand, is also a pluricentric language with national standards in Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, etc.

Dennis Ager argues that “individuals can be forced to change their language allegiance, or can adopt a new language because they wish to demonstrate their desire to be part of a political community.” Indeed, many indigenous groups, including these in Canada, USA, Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, and Sub-Saharan Africa were forced to adopt the language of the colonizing power. The former Soviet Union also imposed the Russian language across its vast Eurasian territory as a lingua franca and because the knowledge of Russian was a precondition for a professional advancement, millions of Soviet citizens adopted it as their language. The Soviet communists were also notorious with their policy of inventing new languages in order to achieve better control over certain ethnic groups and to prevent irredentist claims. The cases of Karelian and Moldovan are extremely important for this thesis, because they provide wonderful examples for comparison with the linguistic situation in Macedonia, where the Serbs followed a Soviet-style linguistic policy.

When the Soviet government proclaimed the creation of the Karelian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (KASSR) in 1920, its official language was Finnish. The Soviet policy makers under the orders of Stalin, however, decided to create a new language – Karelian, written with the Russian Cyrillic alphabet instead of the Finnish Roman

⁸⁵ Ager, *Language Community and the State*, 28-9.

orthography with some local Karelian dialect words as well as Russian terms added to the new Karelian language. The new language was proclaimed on January 1, 1938 but a few years before this date there was a vigorous preparation for the forthcoming linguistic assault. The *Pravda* newspaper, as well as the Soviet pseudo-linguist of Finno-Ugric origin – D.V. Bubrikh – argued that the Karelians were not only a distinct people but their language was as different from Finnish as Russian was from Polish.⁸⁶ Meanwhile, thousands of Karelian Finnish intellectuals and even prominent Communists were sent to concentration camps away from Karelia in the period 1935-1938, so that when the real ban of the standard Finnish language came in 1938, there were few prominent Karelian Finns left who could oppose the new policy. This campaign continued for 28 months until April 1940, when Stalin decided to create a new Finno-Karelian ASSR, including newly-acquired lands from Finland, again with Finnish as its official language. Paul Austin points out that: “archival documents now reveal that so hurried and arbitrary was the selection of a dialectal base and a phonetic system that no Karelians could actually understand their own literary language.”⁸⁷ The Second World War prevented Stalin from continuing his Karelian linguistic policy and after the war, even though Finnish continued to serve as an official language, it was slowly replaced by Russian as a ‘lingua franca’ and in 1989, 95% of Karelians also spoke Russian, whereas 10%, primarily in the urban areas, did not speak a language other than Russian. This rapid assimilation also led to only 40.8% of the residents to consider Finnish as their native tongue.⁸⁸

The fate of the Romanian language of Moldova was even more tragic, because Soviet linguistic policy there worked consistently for the creation of a literary Moldovan language

⁸⁶ Austin, “Soviet Karelian,” 21.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

different from Romanian in the period 1924-1992. Soviet policy makers even tried to deny the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identity of the Moldovans with the Romanians.⁸⁹ During the Cold War, the Soviet government also ordered its obedient cohort of scholars to claim that Moldovan not only existed as a distinct language, but also had a “rich literary history.”⁹⁰

The author of this thesis does not have the linguistic competence to be able to determine which linguistic varieties constitute distinct languages in all reviewed cases. This review, however, clearly indicates that the linguistic situation in the Balkans is not unique and can be compared to other regions of Europe and the world. Linguistically, the distance in time and space leads to the divergence of a single language into a pluricentric language with a larger number of national standard forms as well as the emergence of new *ausbau* languages from it. There is no universal recipe for the time period that a linguistic variety needs to become a language, but this time is certainly not 10, 20, or 50 years. As Peter Trudgill concludes, “the concept of a language is in many cases as much a political, cultural and historical concept as it is a linguistic concept.”⁹¹

1.6: Blood, Religion and Language: Nationalism in the Balkans

The Balkan Peninsula has a long history of state-building. The oldest cultures are the Thracian and Hellenic civilizations, which influenced significantly the whole region. Other ancient civilizations that existed, such as the Illyrian culture and states, were absorbed by the early medieval Balkan states. Between the 7th and 14th c. A.D. most of the Balkan ethnic

⁸⁹ Dennis Deletant, “Language Policy and Linguistic Trends in the Republic of Moldavia, 1924-1992” In Donald L. Dyer, ed., *Studies in Moldovan: The History, Culture, Language and Contemporary Politics of the People of Moldova* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 53.

⁹⁰ Donald L. Dyer, “The Making of the Moldovan Language” In Dyer, *Studies in Moldovan*, 89.

⁹¹ Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Variation*, 114.

groups managed to create their own states, to create literary languages and to achieve historic glory at least in their own claims. Most inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula accepted Orthodox Christianity from the powerful Byzantine Empire, whereas the Croats and the Slovenes became Roman Catholics, as well as some of the Albanians. The Balkan medieval states, however, were not national in the modern sense of the term. They were rather multiethnic empires dominated by the elite of a certain ethnic group and in fact, except for the ruling elite, mostly rural inhabitants who did not express any ethnic consciousness. Their historical development was interrupted by the Ottoman invasion of the region in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, as well as the Habsburg enlargement in Slovenia and Croatia.

In the mid-18th and early 19th centuries, the Balkan peninsula was still shared by the two empires. The only independent country outside the boundaries of both empires was Montenegro. The Ottoman Empire was quite foreign to the Balkan peoples culturally, religiously, ethnically, and linguistically except for large portions of Albanian and Bosnian Muslims. So was the Habsburg Empire, which was almost equally unsuccessful in claiming the loyalty of its Balkan subjects. The Balkan “literati” could not imagine that they could build a civic nation within the boundaries of these empires and they viewed historical knowledge as one of their main instruments for promoting a national revival, national consciousness and self-esteem among the Balkan peoples. Hence, the majority of Balkan intellectuals were among the strongest proponents of the ethnic nation concept in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.⁹²

Using the nation-building model of the Czech historian Miroslav Hroch with three phases – A, B, and C⁹³ – the national awakening of Balkan nations can be broken into four

⁹² White, *Nationalism and Territory*, 15-66.

⁹³ Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe*, 22-30.

periods: the mid-18th c. until the 1870s, the 1880s to 1918, the inter-war period and the Cold War, and lastly – the postcommunist development.

Hroch defines the first stage of ethnic nation-building as a period in which intellectuals do broad scholarly research into the history, literature, linguistics, archaeology, and culture of the ethnic group. Thus, the intellectuals start to be aware of their distinctiveness from other groups. During Phase B nationalism becomes a political program and the goal of the intellectuals and historians is to attract as many people as possible for their national project through a mass dissemination of their findings and mass agitation. During Phase C the ethnic nation project has already become a mass social movement. The majority of the population has already accepted it and there are different political wings, which have their own plans, for achieving the national goal.⁹⁴

The first period of national development in the Balkans, the mid-18th century to the 1870s, was a time when most Balkan ethnic groups passed through phases A and B. The Ottoman Turks did not recognize ethnonational groups but rather religious minorities or ethnoreligious minorities in the best case, called *millets*. The Muslims formed one group (millet), regardless of their ethnicity, whereas all Orthodox Christians were called *Rum millet* under the spiritual guidance of the Greek patriarch in Constantinople. Rich Greek merchants studied in Western Europe, where they were exposed to the Enlightenment. Not surprisingly, Greek intellectuals were the first to transfer Enlightenment ideas to the Balkans and to start their national awakening. Adamantios Korais (1748-1833) and Rigas Velestinlis (1757-1798) were two crucial figures in Phases A and B of the Greek national revival.⁹⁵ Born in Smyrna, Korais spent most of his life abroad, in Amsterdam and then in Paris, witnessing the French

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22-30.

⁹⁵ Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece* (New York: Oxford U. Press, 2001), 10.

Revolution. Disenchanted with revolutionary violence, he decided to work for the national revival of his own people. Korais disliked the term *Rum millet*, which included all Greeks, because it implied that the core of Greek identity is Orthodoxy and Byzantine (East Roman) heritage. He disdained the Greek Orthodox clergy, which collaborated with the Ottoman authorities and Korais referred to the clergy as “monkish barbarians.”⁹⁶ As he studied Classical philology, he was persuaded that the core of Greek identity should not be medieval Byzantium, but rather the Hellenic ancient heritage. His goal was to win over his compatriots for a new Greek national model that included the ancient Hellenic glory as its foundation. After solid research in classical philology, Korais concentrated his efforts on the purification of the Greek language with the introduction of *Katharevousa* (the Greek literary language that stressed archaic grammar and ancient vocabulary, which had to replace the Turkish and other foreign words that were infused into the popular spoken Greek language, called *Dhimotiki*).⁹⁷ Korais started Phase A for the Greek ethnic nation. Rigas Velesinlis (1757-1798), a Hellenized administrator, embraced Korais’ ideas and developed a plan for insurrection that would liberate all Balkan peoples from Ottoman oppression, which would lead to the formation of a large state under Greek leadership from Wallachia to Asia Minor. Thus, as the Canadian historian Thomas Gallant pointed out, Korais became the “father of the Greek revolution.”⁹⁸ The Greek War of Independence (1821-1828) marked the peak of Phase B in the Greek national revival.

The Greeks had an easy task to define their ethnic group and language, which was definitely an *abstand* language, compared to the other Balkan languages and cultures. Due to the long domination of the Ottoman Empire, there were few educated people in the central

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

parts of the peninsula and virtually no professional historians. The Orthodox Church became the main preserver of education, culture, and language for many of the Slavic inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire and thus it was not surprising that the first Serbian and Bulgarian historians were Orthodox monks or priests. There was a huge melange of ethnic groups, religions, languages, and dialects and the boundaries between them were often blurred and insecure. For the external observer, the ethno-national and linguistic boundaries in the Balkans were almost incomprehensible. A wonderful example for this South Slavic amalgamation was Christopher Zhefarovich. He was a former monk from Doiran, presently in FYR of Macedonia, who in Vienna in 1741 published his book, *Stematografiya* with portraits of medieval Serbian, Bulgarian and other Slavic kings, using a language which was a mixture of Serbian, Old Slavonic and Russian. This book is considered the first Serbian book but the nationality of Zhefarovich is still disputed. He was buried in Moscow in 1753 as a Bulgarian and is claimed by both Serbs and Bulgarians.⁹⁹ Thus, during Phase A, the first Slavic historians in the Balkans had the task, not only to assert the common national characteristics of their compatriots, but to define also how they differed from their neighbours, i.e. to determine the 'natural' boundaries of the emerging nations. The early Serbian historiography of the 18th c. demonstrated that the Serbian national awakening started sooner when compared to their neighbours and these first Serbian histories were aimed at asserting Serbian national identity based on medieval glory.

Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787-1864), a Serbian linguist and scholar was the most aggressive ideologue of Serbian nationalism during this period. In his *Treasure Box for the History, Language and Customs of Serbians of All Three Faiths* (1849), he asserted that not

⁹⁹ James Franklin Clarke. *The Pen and the Sword: Studies in Bulgarian History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 36.

faith but language is the core of the nation and, since the štokavian dialect was common to many Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Bosnian Muslims, he classified all štokavian speakers as Serbs.¹⁰⁰ This argument created the foundations of the "Greater Serbia" idea and the vision of its proponents on the language and ethnicity of Serbia's neighbours. Karadžić tried to negate the existence of any significant number of Croats, distorting historical and linguistic facts to prove his arguments, because he viewed the Croats, along with the Bulgarians, as the biggest obstacles to Serbian dominance of the Balkans.

Meanwhile, Father Paisii of the Mount Athos Monastery, born in the Pirin Macedonian town of Bansko, launched Phase A for the Bulgarian nation with the first modern Bulgarian book in 1762 called *Slavo-Bulgarian History* as an answer to the Greek and Serbian monks in his monastery that Bulgarians did not have a history. He started with the premise that "of the entire Slavic race the most glorious were the Bulgarians."¹⁰¹ A follower of Paisii was the fervent nationalist and revolutionary George Sava Rakovski (1821-1867) who also preferred to interpret history as he chose, and driven by his desire to inspire his Bulgarian compatriots, proposed a theory of Bulgarian origins in Indian antiquity.¹⁰²

Phase A and B were also initiated across the Danube. The first modern Romanian historians were also concerned with the origin and the definition of the Romanian nation. The Romanian national awakening was initiated by the so called Transylvanian School (*Școala Ardeleană*) in the mid-18th century with key figures Samuel Micu-Klein (1745-1806), George Șincai (1754-1816), and Peter Maior (1756-1821). These theologians and scholars were representatives of the Romanian Uniate Church and were very pro-Western and pro-Latin. They replaced the Romanian Cyrillic alphabet with the modern Romanian

¹⁰⁰ White. *Nationalism and Territory*, 182.

¹⁰¹ Clarke. *The Pen and the Sword*, 96.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 102-3.

alphabet with Roman letters from the model of the French alphabet. Samuel Micu and his followers also fully developed the idea of the Romanian nation and argued that its ethnogenesis was a result of the mixing of Roman soldiers and the local Dacian population. They published numerous histories to persuade the inhabitants of Walachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania that they were all Romanians, i.e. descendants of an ancient Latin civilization.¹⁰³ They inspired so much the Romanian nationalists (i.e. Phase B) that many linguists, persuaded that their language was degraded by the influence of Magyar, German, Turkish, Greek, and the Slavic languages, started to ‘purify’ Romanian by eliminating non-Latin words and replacing them with Latin, French, or Italian words. These nationalists hoped to instill into their compatriots from Walachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania a new national pride of Romanians, even though this term was never used historically.¹⁰⁴

The Slovenian intellectuals led by Franc Miklošič (1813-1891) organized in 1848 in Vienna the cultural movement United Slovenia (*Zedinjena Slovenija*), which demanded a larger role for the Slovenian language in the ethnic Slovenian lands and the unification of all Slovenian ethnic territories into one kingdom within the Habsburg monarchy. Miklošič and his followers were not very fond of the Yugoslav idea, even though the term was coined for the first time by a Slovene. The term “Yugoslav” was used for the first time by the Slovene Jernej-Bartol Kopitar (1780-1844), one of the founders of Slavic Studies, who also initiated the codification of the Slovene language. As a censor with the Viennese government for Slavic and Greek books, Kopitar translated the German compound word Sudslaven (South Slav) in 1816.¹⁰⁵ The Croatians, despite their advanced development compared to the Serbs,

¹⁰³ White. *Nationalism and Territory*, 122-4.

¹⁰⁴ Keith Hitchins, *The Romanian National Movement in Transylvania, 1780-1849* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 108, 149-59.

¹⁰⁵ Blažo Perović, *Jugoslavenstvo i nacional-feudalizam* [Yugoslavism and National-Feudalism] (Belgrade: Gardoš, 1988), 7-8.

also had numerous intellectuals, who supported the Yugoslav idea of uniting all South Slav ethnicities into one nation and country. Ljudevit Gaj (1809-72) was the Croatian who codified the modern Croatian language and one of the leading figures of the so-called Illyrian movement, which sought to unite South Slavs into a common state.¹⁰⁶ This movement later became the Yugoslav movement, once historians realized that the Slavs did not have anything in common with the ancient Illyrians. The Yugoslav idea was the only national idea in the Balkans, which was not a narrow-closed ethno-national idea based on the desire of domination of one single ethnic group.

There was, however, a fundamental difference in the visions of a Yugoslav nation among Croatian, Slovenian and Serbian historians. The Slovenian writer Ivan Čankar (1876-1918) when speaking about the union of the South Slav peoples emphasized: "If it comes to a political union of the South Slav peoples, it can be done only by uniting equal and equivalent peoples."¹⁰⁷ This statement summarized clearly the perception for a common Yugoslav nation of the Croatian and Slovenian intelligentsia. The Serbian historians, however, were quite different with their ethnocentric visions of the future national development of the South Slavs. Jovan Cvijić (1865-1927), a Serbian historian and founder of modern geography in Serbia represented the popular ultra-nationalist Serbian vision of a Yugoslav nation, which in his words should be dominated by Serbia. He also defined very large traditional territories of the Serbs. He included in the Serbian lands parts of western Bulgaria, Bosnia, the Adriatic coast, and even Macedonia, which was South Serbia, according to him.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Elinor Murray Despalatović, *Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1975), 260-8.

¹⁰⁷ Ivan Čankar, "Odrani kritički i polemički spisi" [Selected Criticism and Polemics] in *Slovinci i Jugosloveni* (Belgrade: Novo Pokolenje, 1950), 30.

¹⁰⁸ Jovan Cvijić, *Balkansko poluostrvo i južnoslovenske zemlje* [The Balkan Peninsula and the South Slav Countries] (Belgrade: Zavod za izdavanje udžbenika, 1966), 10-23.

By the end of the 1870s, Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania already had their nation states. In the next period, however, from the 1880s to the end of the First World War, Bulgaria and Greece aimed at creating national consciousness among their masses, which would lead to Phase C in their national movements. The Greeks wanted to incorporate non-Greek speaking minorities within their borders, including Albanians, Vlachs (Arumanians), Bulgarians and even Turkish-speaking Orthodox Christians into their Hellenic nation through schooling and propaganda.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, when the modern Bulgarian state was founded in 1878, due to its great ethnic melange, less than 50% of its population was ethnically Bulgarian, and an even lesser fraction of the inhabitants were literate. During the next few decades, through extensive schooling and assimilation of non-Bulgarian elements, the inhabitants with Bulgarian ethnic consciousness became an overwhelming majority.¹¹⁰

During this period (1880s-1918), the Albanians also started their national revival, known as the *Rilindja* movement, which united many Albanian intellectuals in 1878 to form the League of Prizren with the goal of uniting the Albanian people into one linguistic identity, one culture, and one nation. The key leaders of the League of Prizren – the Frashëri brothers – opposed both the Greek *Megali idea* and the Pan Slavism of the South Slavs.¹¹¹ Thus, the main preoccupation of the first modern Albanian historians was to unite somehow the culturally and linguistically different Gegs and Tosks, divided religiously into Muslims, Orthodox and Catholics. These scholars did not have access to many primary sources to be able to construct the notion of the Illyrian origin of the Albanians yet, and Greater Albania was not a priority. The goal of the day was to persuade the Ottoman officials that Albanians

¹⁰⁹ F.A.K. Yasamee, "Nationality in the Balkans: The Case of the Macedonians," In G. Ozdogan et al. *Balkans: A Mirror of the New World Order* (Istanbul: EREN, 1995), 122-3.

¹¹⁰ Yasamee, "Nationality in the Balkans," 123.

¹¹¹ Robert Elsie, *Historical Dictionary of Albania*. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004), 360-1.

were a nation and they deserved some autonomy within the Empire. In fact, the Albanian historians and politicians were very moderate compared to their peers in the neighbouring countries. Nationalists such as Ismail Qemal, the founder of the Albanian national state in 1913, were certainly aware of the numerous internal divisions among their compatriots and how fragile Albanian national consciousness was, but the alternative of the nation state was a partition of all Albanian lands among the neighbouring Balkan states. Thus, the developing of a strong national sentiment and a genuine Albanian national culture was more important than annexing ethnic Albanian territories such as Kosovo. It was hard to create mass nationalism with 80 % illiteracy among the Albanians even in 1939.¹¹² Thus, Albanian intellectuals such as Branko Merxhani, who propagated the Neo-Albanism among Albanian nationalists, hoped to create and cement a widespread national identity and Albanian consciousness.¹¹³ Phases A and B had to be launched simultaneously if the Albanian intellectuals wanted their ethnicity to survive.

During the Interwar period and the Cold War, three other Balkan ethnic identities attempted to pass through Phases A, B, and C almost simultaneously, without a clear distinction between the phases – Macedonians, Montenegrins and Bosnians. In the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, which was renamed Yugoslavia in 1929, the Serbian historians and the new government imagined a homogeneous ethnic nation under complete Serbian dominance and not a civic/political nation with equal partner ethnicities. Serbian scholars and politicians such as Stevan Moljević and Ilija Grašanin influenced immensely the

¹¹² Robert C. Austin, "Greater Albania: The Albanian State and the Question of Kosovo, 1912-2001" In John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower, eds. *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 239-41.

¹¹³ Elsie, *Historical Dictionary of Albania*, 308-9.

new government with its attempts to centralize and homogenize the new state under complete Serbian domination.¹¹⁴

The Croatian intellectuals, however, claimed that historically Croatia had never lost its independence completely, despite its union with Hungary and later with the Habsburg Empire. Thus, the Croats did not expect to submit their country completely to Serbia and they were quickly disenchanted with the Yugoslav idea. The Croatian historian Milan Šufflay (1879-1931) explained the increasing opposition and resentment towards such Serbian policies arguing that the new Yugoslav state was in fact a modern Serbian empire.¹¹⁵ The Slovenes were also discontented with the extreme Serbian nationalism. In 1932, the Slovene left-wing intellectual Josip Vidmar (1895-1992) published a study *Kulturni Problem Slovenstva* [The Slovenian Cultural Problem], in which he argued that the Slovenian language was a crucial cultural artifact, which should be preserved. The book was banned by the Belgrade government due to its lack of 'Yugoslav loyalty.'¹¹⁶ Montenegrins, Macedonians, and Bosnians were virtually ignored as terms in interwar Yugoslavia and, as a matter of fact, such ethnic identities were absent. After the Second World War, Tito initially recognized only the Montenegrins and the Macedonians as separate nations. The idea behind Montenegrin recognition was that Serbia was too big and this fact was unbalancing the Yugoslav state. The recognition of Macedonians as a nation led to the quick launching of Phases A, B, and C by the Yugoslav Communists, because the predominantly ethnic

¹¹⁴ White. *Nationalism and Territory*, 183.

¹¹⁵ Mark Biondich, "We Were Defending the State: Nationalism, Myth, and Memory in Twentieth-Century Croatia," In John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower, eds. *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 58.

¹¹⁶ Kenneth E. Basom, "Class and Nation in Slovenia. Edvard Kardelj versus Josip Vidmar" *East European Quarterly*, vol 26, no. 2 (Summer 1992), 209-18.

Bulgarian population of the area did not yet have a Macedonian national identity.¹¹⁷ The first two decades after the Second World War were a period of fervent nationalism in Yugoslav Macedonia that led to the codification of the Macedonian literary language, which never existed before, the proliferation of scholarly works, proving the existence of the Macedonian nation, as well as mustering the mass support of the population for the national idea through violence and gulags for the older pro-Bulgarian intellectuals and mass propaganda and schooling for the younger generations.

The Bosnian situation was very interesting, because regardless of their status as a Yugoslav republic, the population declared on censuses Croatian, Serbian, Yugoslav or nation undeclared. The separate nation status in Yugoslavia, however, led to prestige and quotas in the administration and the government of the country and the Bosnian Muslims could not take full advantage of these opportunities, since they were not a nation. Thus, in May 1968 the Central Committee of the Communist party of Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaimed the Muslims a separate nation.¹¹⁸

During the postcommunist period (early 1990s to the present), the policy of the ultranationalist Serbian politician Slobodan Milošević led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia. As a president of both Serbia and Yugoslavia, Milošević concentrated great power into his hands, which he used to support the Serbian minorities in Croatia, Bosnia and particularly in Kosovo. Under the command of Milošević the Yugoslav police and army became merely tools of Serbian nationalism that were used for suppressing anti-Serbian protests in Croatia, Kosovo elsewhere in Yugoslavia. This unreasonable policy led to the gradual disintegration of Yugoslavia, the assertion of the Bosnian and Montenegrin nations,

¹¹⁷ Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, 307-27.

¹¹⁸ Aleksandar Pavković, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism in a Multinational State* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 66.

as well as attempts for the codification of separate from the Serbo-Croatian language – Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin languages.¹¹⁹ On the other hand, Milošević cannot be blamed as the only culprit for the disintegration of Yugoslavia. He put the last nails into the Yugoslav coffin, but essentially, as Dejan Guzina argues, the institutional composition of former Yugoslavia allowed the development of mutually exclusive ethnic nationalisms, which led to the Yugoslav “self-destruction.”¹²⁰

Thus, it is clear that the predominant nation concept in the Balkans is the ethnic nation concept and only in the former Yugoslavia was there a significant number of scholars, who favoured the more inclusive concept of a civic nation. In the end, however, the Yugoslav civic nation idea also became a victim of ethnonationalism. Revealing an ancient ancestry, a glorious past (‘golden age’) and traditionally vast territories was a priority for all Balkan intellectuals as a tool for mustering mass support for their national idea. The tendency to refute the right of a separate identity to the smaller nations (Bosnians, Macedonians, and Albanians) by the larger nations who became nationally conscious earlier (Serbs, Croats, Bulgarians) initiated additional tension between the Balkan ethnic groups. History was perceived as a living organism and its influence on all Balkan states was tremendous. Every nationality in the Balkans felt obliged to muster all its brightest scholars in order to prove that this particular nation and state had a history, a long history. Historiography was perceived as a weapon in the struggle to prove who deserves to be placed on the map as a nation with its own state. The other key element in the nationalism of Balkan nations continues to be language, since it is perceived as the core of a particular

¹¹⁹ Aleksandar Pavković, *The Fragmentation of Yugoslavia: Nationalism in a Multinational State*. Second Edition (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 110-70.

¹²⁰ Dejan Guzina, “The Self-Destruction of Yugoslavia,” *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*, 22 (2000), 21.

ethnic identity. The nations with affirmed national languages, on the other hand, Greeks, Bulgarians and Romanians, also had their own linguistic purification campaigns in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Thus, the difference between the older nations (Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, Albanians, Romanians, Croatians, and Slovenes) and the new nations (Bosnians, Montenegrins and Macedonians) is temporal. The new nations have to construct their national identities in the present, which causes immense difficulties and criticisms by their neighbours. The criticisms, however, are politically motivated by the double-standard principle. The Greek and the Bulgarian scholars and politicians criticize the nation-building efforts of FYROM and its linguistic policy, because the FYROM encroaches on both Greek and Bulgarian national symbols. The so-called Montenegrin and Bosnian languages, however, which should draw the same criticisms, since linguistically they are national variants of Serbo-Croatian, do not provoke scholarly interest in Bulgaria and Greece, since these countries are irrelevant to their national doctrines.

The other very important dogma in the Balkans is that the vast majority of politicians and intellectuals claim that ethnonational identity is something that cannot fluctuate over time. 'Once a Greek, or Serb, always a Greek or Serb' is the general principle, even though all efforts of the states are concentrated on the assimilation of the local minorities, which is in contradiction with the principle of fixed national identities. The belief that national and ethnic identities are fixed and existed unchanged for thousands of years in this shape and form led many scholars and linguists to attempt to demonstrate with archival sources that since in the 10th or 19th century a certain nation did not exist, therefore it could not exist in the present.

CHAPTER 2

WHO ARE THE MACEDONIANS?

2.1: Ancient Macedonia: Hellenic Pride and Glamour

Macedonian ethnic identity was propagated by left-wing intellectuals under the influence of the Comintern in the 1920s and 1930s and started to gain ground among the masses in Vardar Macedonia no earlier than the late 1940s. In fact, as late as 1950, Elizabeth Barker wrote that: “The feeling of being Macedonians and nothing but Macedonians seems to be a sentiment of fairly recent growth, and even today it is not very deep-rooted.”¹ Thus, the alleged link between modern and ancient Macedonians raises serious doubts. Not only Greek sources, but also numerous scholars from around the world, including N.G. L. Hammond, Stoyan Pribichevich and even the Macedonian archeologist Ivan Mikulčik² point out that there is no historic, ethnic, linguistic or cultural continuity between the ancient Macedonians and the modern inhabitants of the FYROM. Hence, Ancient Macedonia should not be even mentioned in this thesis, since it has nothing to do with the FYROM or Macedonian immigrants to Canada. Due to the increasing speculations with this issue in the FYROM, however, as well as among the Macedonian diaspora in Toronto, it is necessary to reaffirm that Ancient Macedonia was an integral part of the ancient Hellenic world.

In the 11th and 10th c. BC, during a period of large migrations within the territory of modern northwestern Greece and southern FYROM, the tribe of Macedones or Macedonians

¹ Elizabeth Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power Politics* (London: Royal Institute of International affairs, 1950), 10.

² N.G.L. Hammond, *Philip of Macedon* (London: Duckworth, 1994); Stoyan Pribichevich, *Macedonia: Its People and History* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 37-8; Ivan Mikulčik, *Srednovekovni Gradovi I Tvrđini Vo Makedonija* [Medieval Towns and Castles in Macedonia] (Skopje: Open society Institute Macedonia, 1996), 5-30.

inhabited the area. The word *mak* is of Hellenic origin and it probably means 'high' or 'long' and thus, Macedonia means 'highland.' The founder or the father of the tribe was called Macedon or Makedon, i.e. 'highlander' or a 'tall man.'³

The first Macedonian kingdom was founded by Perdiccas I in c. 700 BC, but the golden days of the ancient Macedonian statehood were under the rule of Philip II of Macedon (359-336 BC) and his son Alexander III of Macedon (336-323 BC), who became known as Alexander the Great. Alexander managed to unite all the divided Hellenic city-states into a pan-Hellenic state and he also founded an empire that conquered most of the known world in antiquity. Alexander's troops spread Hellenic culture, language and architecture across his vast empire, reaching from the Balkan peninsula and North Africa to northern India.⁴ The 19th century German historian Johan Gustav Droysen coined the term *Hellenistic period* to define this enormous expansion of Hellenic culture and colonization over non-Greek territories that were conquered by Alexander the Great in the 4th c. B.C.⁵ The Macedonian Empire was divided among Alexander's generals after his death in 323 B.C. and in 168 B.C. the Romans conquered the Balkan remnants of the empire.

Greek historiography maintains the position that Macedonians were merely one of the Hellenic tribes, i.e. ethnic Greeks and they spoke a Doric dialect, which was sometimes referred to as a Macedonian language, since the ancient Greeks called 'languages' the various dialects.⁶ The participation of the Macedonian king Alexander I (498-450 B.C.) in the Pan-Hellenic Olympic Games is further proof that the Canadian historian Michael

³ N.G.L. Hammond, "Connotations of 'Macedonia' and of 'Macedones' Until 323 B. C." *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 45 (1), 1995, 123-4.

⁴ Maria Koursi, ed. *Macedonia: History and Politics* (Athens: Ekdotike Hellados S.A., 1989), 8-9.

⁵ Michael J. Maclean, "Johann Gustav Droysen and the Development of Historical Hermeneutics", *History and Theory*, 21(3), October, 1982, 347-65.

⁶ Michael B. Cosmopoulos, *Macedonia: An Introduction to Its Political History* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Studies in Classical Civilization, 1992), 12-24. Andriotes, N.P. "History of the Name 'Macedonia'" In -----, *Macedonia: Past and Present* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1992).

Cosmopoulos uses to argue that the ancient Macedonians were ethnic Greeks, because only Greeks could participate in the Olympic Games.⁷ The Greek scholars, however, forget to mention that Alexander I faced enormous opposition from his competitors, who wanted to ban his participation, because they considered him as a non-Hellene.⁸ The Danish historian Vemund Aarbakke, as well as the U.S. historian Hugh Poulton point out that, most probably the ancient Macedonians had ethnic and cultural influences by non-Hellenic groups, particularly the Thracians, the Illyrians and perhaps others. Hence, initially they were considered foreigners by their Hellenic neighbours in the South.⁹ This is irrelevant, however, because the ancient Macedonians adopted the Greek culture, names and language and by the 4th c. B.C. they were an integral part of the ancient Hellenic civilization. Archeologists discovered over 1400 ancient inscriptions, written in Greek by ancient Macedonian rulers.¹⁰ Hammond described Philip II as: “both a Greek and a Macedonian, even as Demosthenes was a Greek and an Athenian.”¹¹ Hammond also concluded that at this time the Macedonians were “an outlying member of the family of Greek-speaking peoples.”¹² Philip’s son, Alexander the Great, hellenized his new territories and never ‘Macedonized’ them, because he was a Hellene by birth, consciousness, culture, language and education. Alexander the Great brought a peak to the ancient Hellenic expansion and glamour, which the Greeks were never able to reach again.

⁷ Cosmopoulos, *Macedonia*, 12-14.

⁸ Eugene N. Borza, *In the Shadow of Olympus: The Emergence of Macedon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 10-30.

⁹ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia, 1870-1913* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 2003), 6; Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1995), 13.

¹⁰ Pantelis G. Vyssoulis, *Macedonian Hellenism: Centuries of Struggle and Sacrifice* (Toronto: Hellenic Publishing Company, 1983), 32-8.

¹¹ Hammond, *Philip of Macedon*, 1.

¹² *Ibid*, 1.

It is also certain that the ancient Macedonians never spoke a Slavic language and in fact, when the barbarian invasions started in the 4th-7th centuries AD in the Balkans, the remnants of the Macedones and other Hellenes who lived in Macedonia were pushed to eastern Thrace, the area between Adrianople (presently the Turkish city of Edirne) and Constantinople. This area would be called the province (*theme*) of Macedonia by the Byzantines between 6th and 15th c. A.D., whereas the modern territory of the FYROM was included in the province (*theme*) of Bulgaria after the destruction of Samuel's Bulgarian Empire in 1014-1018.¹³

2.2: Medieval Macedonia: The Heyday of Bulgarian Culture

In the 2nd c. B.C. Macedonia was completely subdued by the Roman Empire and in the 4th c. A.D., the Romans divided Macedonia into three provinces: New Epirus (a region of modern southern Albania), Macedonia Salutaris (the former Dardania, which roughly coincides with the modern territory of the FYROM) and Macedonia proper (modern Aegean Macedonia). After 395 A.D. when the Roman Empire was divided into the Western and Eastern Roman empires, Macedonia was transferred to the control of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire.¹⁴

According to the modern Macedonian archeologist Ivan Mikulčik, solid archeological evidence indicates that most Slavic tribes, which came to the Balkan peninsula in the late 5th and early 6th centuries passed through Macedonia but continued further south, because they regarded Macedonia as unattractive and devastated land. The proto-Bulgarian

¹³ Bozhidar Dimitrov, *The Ten Lies of Macedonianism* (Sofia: St. Clement of Ohrid, 2003), 7-8.

¹⁴ John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997), 55-6.

Khan Kuber settled in modern central FYROM in the Prilep field with permission from the Byzantine authorities in Salonica in 680 A.D., a year before the founding of the Bulgarian state. In 688 A.D. the local Slavic settlers concluded a treaty with the proto-Bulgarians against Byzantium. More proto-Bulgarians settled in modern eastern FYROM, sent by Khan Krum (803-814), the ruler of the newly formed Bulgarian state, who incorporated the eastern parts of modern FYROM into Bulgaria¹⁵

By the middle of the 9th century, the Bulgarian prince Boris (852-889) joined most of Macedonia to his Bulgarian state, except southern Aegean Macedonia and its capital Salonica, which were still under Byzantine rule.¹⁶ In fact, historically, the Bulgarians never managed to conquer Salonica. In 864 A.D. Prince Boris accepted Orthodox Christianity from the Byzantine Emperor Michael III (842-867). Boris hoped that the new religion would help him to unify his subjects, who were divided by their pagan Slavic and proto-Bulgarian gods and cultures. Boris also needed a unifying written language, which came again with the help of the Byzantines. The Byzantines sent two Greek diplomats and brothers- Cyril and Methodius to Greater Moravia with the mission of creating a Slavic alphabet. Cyril and Methodius created the *Glagolitic* alphabet, but after their persecution and death, their disciples found refuge in Bulgaria after 885, when Methodius died. One of these disciples, Saint Clement of Ohrid decided to create a more simplified alphabet and introduced the Cyrillic alphabet, which was named after his teacher Cyril. Prince Boris was delighted to accept the Slavic disciples of Cyril and Methodius, who were born within the borders of his state and he opened a school in the old Bulgarian capital Preslav, where the disciples were copying and writing books in Old Church Slavonic. Boris wanted to open a similar centre in

¹⁵ Mikulčik, *Srednovekovni Gradovi* [Medieval Towns], 27-32.

¹⁶ Kiro Dojčinovski, *Makedonija niz Vekovite* [Macedonia Through the Centuries] (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1995), 29-30.

his western provinces as well and he sent Clement to Ohrid with the mission to spread the Slavonic alphabet among the local population. Thus, Clement became famous as St. Clement of Ohrid (840-916) and was described by the Byzantine chronicler Theophylactus as the first Bulgarian bishop, because he was ordained as Archbishop of Ohrid in 893.¹⁷ Ohrid continued to be an important Bulgarian cultural, religious and literary centre in the next centuries and became known as the 'Bulgarian Jerusalem.'¹⁸ The first Bulgarian Empire reached its heyday during the reign of Boris' son, Tsar Simeon I (893-927), who conquered most of the Balkan Peninsula and died while preparing a raid on Constantinople.¹⁹ After his death, however, Bulgaria was exhausted and ruled by weaker tsars and as a result, the Byzantines conquered the Bulgarian capital Preslav in 971 and forced the Bulgarian tsar Roman and his brother Roman to abdicate. Samuil, one of the sons of a Bulgarian noble, and ruler of a province, refused to give up. The Byzantine chronicle of John Zonaras mentions that Roman was permitted to return to Bulgaria to become a tsar, since "the four sons of one of the comitajis [provincial chief] in Bulgaria-David, Moses, Aaron and Samuil had become outlaws and stirred up the Bulgarians."²⁰ Since eastern Bulgaria and its capital were conquered by the Byzantines, Roman went to the western provinces and became a tsar in 992 with Skopje as his capital in 980. In 992, Roman was captured again by the Byzantines and even though Samuil replaced him as a ruler, he honoured the rule not to become a tsar while the previous tsar was still alive. After the death of Roman in 997 A.D. Samuil became a Bulgarian tsar and he moved the capital to Ohrid. His lands included modern western and northern

¹⁷ R. J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11-15.

¹⁸ Dimitrov, *The Ten Lies of Macedonianism*, 26.

¹⁹ Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich, *Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920: A History of East Central Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), ix; Paul Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier: A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900-1204* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 2000), 1-18.

²⁰ John Zonaras, *Chronicle on the Comitopuli and their Uprising*, extract, In ---. *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State. Vol 1: From Settlement of the Slavs in Macedonia to the End of WW I* (Skopje: University of Cyril and Methodius, 1985), 95.

Bulgaria, the FYROM and large parts of Serbia and Albania. The Bulgarian patriarch also managed to escape to Ohrid in 997 and Ohrid became the residence of the Bulgarian patriarchy. Samuil was also recognized by Pope Gregory V as king of Bulgaria, but this recognition did not help him against the Byzantine army, which defeated and blinded 14, 000 Bulgarian soldiers in 1014. Samuil died shortly after receiving the news of this defeat and the Byzantine Emperor Basil II of the Macedonian dynasty (976-1025) became famous as *Bulgaroctonos* [Bulgar-slayer]. The chronicle of the medieval Byzantine historian John Skylitzes described these turbulent events.²¹ In 1018, when Samuil's nephew Ivan Vladislav was defeated and killed by the Byzantines, Bulgaria, including modern FYROM, was finally and completely incorporated into the Byzantine Empire until 1185.²² An important source of Ivan Vladislav's rule was the so-called Bitola inscription, which was discovered near Bitola in 1956 during the demolition of a mosque. The inscription is written in Old Bulgarian, circa 1015 and commemorates the building of the Bitola fortress as a Bulgarian haven by the tsar Ivan Vladislav, who described himself as "Bulgarian by birth."²³ Unfortunately, the Macedonian state authorities do not allow free access to this source and keep it locked in the basement of the Bitola historical museum.²⁴

The Byzantine Emperor Basil II divided the conquered Bulgarian lands into two major themes (provinces): the theme of Paristrion (the lands between the Danube and the Balkan mountains) and the theme of Bulgaria in the central Balkans, which included the

²¹ John Skylitzes, *Synopsis In ---. Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People*, 95-7; Srdjan Pirivatrić, *Samuilovata darzhava*. [Samuil's State] (Sofia: Agata-A, 2000), 62-72.

²² Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 21.

²³ Dimitrov, *The Ten Lies of Macedonianism*, 28.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 28.

lands of the modern FYROM. Basil also proclaimed Skopje to be the capital of the new Byzantine province of Bulgaria.²⁵

During the 11th century, there were two major uprisings against the Byzantine power in the province of Bulgaria. In 1040, Peter Delyan proclaimed himself the tsar of Bulgarians and conquered Nish and Skopje but his rebels were eventually defeated by the Byzantine army in 1041 and Peter Delyan was captured and perhaps executed in Constantinople.²⁶ In 1072, a group of Bulgarian nobles (*boyars*) led by George Voyteh raised an anti-Byzantine revolt and proclaimed Constantine Bodin, one of the sons of the king of Zeta, Michael I as emperor of the Bulgarians and crowned him in Prizren and then in Skopje as Peter III in the fall of 1072, but the Byzantine army defeated the rebels at the Aegean Macedonian city of Kastoria in 1072.²⁷ In the 12th century, however, the Byzantine Empire was in a period of decline and in 1185, the uprising of Assen and Peter successfully led to the creation of the Second Bulgarian Empire, the remnants of which were conquered by the Ottomans in 1396. Initially only eastern Macedonia was within the boundaries of the second Bulgarian state, but during the rule of Kaloyan (1197-1207) and Ivan Assen II (1218-1241) all Macedonian lands except Aegean Macedonia were incorporated into Bulgaria. Aegean Macedonia became part of the Latin Kingdom of Salonica and ultimately the Latin Empire (1204-1261).²⁸

By the end of the 13th century, however, the second Bulgarian Empire started to decline and the neighbouring Serbs used the opportunity to fill the power vacuum. In 1282, the Serbian king Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282-1321) conquered Skopje and in 1334, the greatest medieval Serbian ruler, king Stefan Dušan (1331-1346) conquered Strumica, Ohrid,

²⁵ Mikulčik, *Srednovkovni Gradovi* [Medieval Towns], 47.

²⁶ Fine, John Van Antwerp, *The Early Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century* (Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press, 1991), 203-5.

²⁷ Mikulčik, *Srednovkovni Gradovi* [Medieval Towns], 48.

²⁸ Dojčinovski, *Makedonija niz Vekovite* [Macedonia Through the Centuries], 34-6.

Radovich and in 1346, Skopje became his capital.²⁹ Stefan Dušan was crowned in Skopje as emperor of Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians.³⁰ After the death of king Dušan, however, the Serbian kingdom quickly collapsed and its lands were divided into small principalities. Except Salonica, which the Serbs never conquered, the Serbian domination of Macedonia lasted only 10 years in Serres, Edessa, and Strumica, 13 years in Melnik, 21 years in Prilep, 25 in Veles and Štip and 73 years in Skopje, Debar and Tetovo.³¹

After the death of Stefan Dušan in 1346, his wife Helena of Bulgaria, a sister of the Bulgarian tzar Ivan Alexander (1331-1371) ruled southern Macedonia until 1359 and her court was based in the Aegean Macedonian city of Serres. In the period of 1360s-1390s, the lands of Macedonia were divided into small principalities and kingdoms. Constantine Dragaš (1355-1395), with both Serbian and Bulgarian ancestors, ruled large parts of Eastern Macedonia before the Ottomans subdued him and his capital was based in the Bulgarian town of Kyustendil, known in the Middle Ages as Velbāzhd. King Vukashin (1365-1371) and his son Marko (1371-1395) ruled central Macedonia with Prilep as their capital. Both rulers became famous through the Serbian and Bulgarian epic poetry. A number of medieval historians such as the Serbian Mihail Konstantinović (1460), the Albanian Ivan Muzaki (1510), and the Jewish scholar Joseph Ben Joshua (15th c.) mentioned prince Marko as a Bulgarian ruler.³² Prince Marko's glory, however, is based more on folklore epic stories than on his real historical significance for the Balkan Christians. Despite the Serbian and Bulgarian epic tales of his struggle against the Turks, in fact he became an Ottoman vassal

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

³⁰ Vyssoulis, *Macedonian Hellenism*, 96.

³¹ Kosta Tzarnushanov, *Serbian and Croatian Evidence of the Bulgarian Ethnicity in Macedonia* (Sofia: Veritas et Pneuma, 1996), 46-7.

³² Tzarnushanov, *Serbian and Croatian Evidence*, 43-50.

and died in 1395 as a participant in the Ottoman military campaign against Wallachia.³³ The small Bulgarian and Serbian principalities in Macedonia, which were typical feudal formations, were powerless to prevent their incorporation into the Ottoman Empire.

2.3: Under the Shadow of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Turks used the power vacuum in the Balkans to incorporate the lands of the Byzantine, Bulgarian and Serbian states into their empire. In 1385, Bitola, Prilep, Ohrid and Kastoria became Ottoman possessions. In 1389- Kratovo fell, in 1392- Skopje and in 1394 Salonica also became part of the Ottoman Empire. Thus, in 1395, after the death of Constantine Dragaš and Prince Marko, the whole Macedonian region became an Ottoman territory for more than 500 years until 1912.³⁴ The consequences of the Ottoman conquest were manifold. The Ottomans established a completely different political, administrative and military order in the Balkans. The new Christian lands, including Macedonia, were divided into *sancaks* (provinces). Similar to Western Europe, all lands were the private property of the sultan and he granted half of the farming lands to large landowners (timar), one third to fervent Muslims and only a sixth to the peasants or *raya* in Ottoman terms.³⁵

Ethnicity was a concept foreign to the Ottomans. There was initially no differentiation by language or race among the different ethnic groups in the Empire. Religion was the most important factor for the Ottoman Turks when they classified their subject population. Even for high Ottoman offices, ethnicity was not a factor. The first requirement

³³ Hristo Matanov, *Yugozapadnite bālgarski zemi prez 14 vek* [The Southwestern Bulgarian Lands During the 14th Century] (Sofia: Nauka & Izkustvo, 1986), 178-87.

³⁴ Dojčinovski, *Makedonija niz Vekovite* [Macedonia Through the Centuries], 55-9.

³⁵ Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908 from Western Sources* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 5-6.

for stepping into office was to be a Muslim and secondly to speak and write in Turkish. This policy allowed many Grand Vezirs and other important Ottoman officials to be Slavonic Muslim converts or Albanian Muslims.³⁶

The Christian and Jewish faiths and populations were respected as 'people of the book', because of the common roots of the three religions. Under the *millet* system, based on religion, all Orthodox Christians in the Balkans became part of the *Rum millet*, under the spiritual guidance of the Greek patriarch. In fact, the Serbs and the Bulgarians managed to preserve their autocephalous churches up to the 18th century. In the 18th century, however, the Greek patriarch persuaded the Sultan to place both Slavic churches under the control of the Greek patriarch. Thus, in 1766, the Serbian archbishopric of Peć ceased to exist and in 1767 the Bulgarian Archbishopric of Ohrid was also suppressed.³⁷ Both Archbishoprics were crucial for preserving the Slavonic culture and language of the local population. The stamp of the 16th century Archbishop of Ohrid Gregorius is preserved in the Rumyantsev Museum in Moscow and its signature is quite revealing: "By God's grace, of all Bulgaria and Justiniana Prima Ohrid Archbishop, Gregorius."³⁸

There were Slavs in Macedonia and elsewhere, who accepted voluntarily the Muslim faith for economic or other reasons. In the 15th century, there were mass conversions of Slavs, particularly around the town of Gevgelija, in southern Vardar Macedonia and the Slavic converts became known in Bulgarian as *pomaks*.³⁹ The conversions to Islam, however, were not always voluntary. There were violent forced conversions of adult Christians, as well as Christian children through the cruel Ottoman practice of the *devşirme*

³⁶ Hugh Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 31-2.

³⁷ Elizabeth Barker, "The Origin of the Macedonian Dispute," In James Pettifer, ed. *The New Macedonian Question* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 3-14.

³⁸ -----, *Macedonia: Documents and Materials* (Sofia: Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1978), 55.

³⁹ Dojčinovski, *Makedonija niz Vekovite* [Macedonia Through the Centuries], 59-60.

(gathering of children), which was a form of taxation demanding of Christian families to give one of their children, usually boys, to the Ottoman army.⁴⁰

Another cruel Ottoman practice against Christians, particularly in the 14th century, was slavery. Initially, in the 1380s, when the Ottoman Empire was still at war with the remaining Balkan states, Christian captives, including inhabitants of Macedonia, were sold on the slave market. In 1381, 1382 and 1383 in the town of Candia, on the isle of Crete, there was a slave market, where the sale and liberation of slaves was confirmed by a notarial deed. The Venetian notary, Manoli Braschiano, questioned the slave and according to the answer, wrote down his/her name, nationality and native town. Bulgarians, Greeks, Wallachians, Turks, Russians, Tartars, Hungarians and Serbs were sold there. It is worth noting that, with the exception of Greek and Wallachian slaves from Macedonia, all Slavonic slaves from Skopje, Veles, Prilep, Bitola, Kostour, Voden, Prespa, Debar, i.e. from all Macedonia were recorded as being “of Bulgarian stock.”⁴¹

Ottoman cruelties led to sporadic resistance by the Christian population. There were two important uprisings on the territory of Macedonia before the 19th century. In 1564-65, over a thousand rebels participated in the Prilep-Mariovo Uprising against Ottoman rule, which was turned into a bloodbath and in 1689 Karposh's rebellion took place in the territory between Kyustendil, Skopje and Pirot. It was led by an anti-Turkish Bulgarian outlaw named Karposh, who was from the town of Dospat in the Rhodope Mountains, where he originally had his base.⁴²

⁴⁰ Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe Under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977), 33.

⁴¹ -----, *Macedonia: Documents and Materials*, 52.

⁴² Matanov, *Yugozapadnite bălgarski zemi* [The Southwestern Bulgarian Lands], 70-87.

The main cause of rebellions was that, despite living in relative toleration, Christians and Jews were seen as second class subjects of the Sultan and only Muslims had full privileges. After its defeat at Vienna in 1683, however, the Ottoman Empire started to stagnate and by the 19th century, the stagnation turned into a quick decline. The Ottoman elite realized that their Empire was falling behind their European neighbours and Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) introduced a series of economic, political and military reforms in the period 1826-1876, known as the *Tanzimat* (reorganization). The new reforms guaranteed the legal equality of all subjects of the Empire, regardless of their religion and promised more economic, institutional and religious freedoms for the Christians.⁴³

2.4: Macedonia in the 19th Century: Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian National Doctrines

The *Tanzimat* reforms of the Ottoman Empire coincided with the national awakening of the Balkan ethnic groups in the late 18th to mid-19th centuries. The gradual demise of the Ottoman power led the European powers to consider the future of the Ottoman European provinces and their redistribution. All European diplomats referred to this issue as “the Eastern Question.”⁴⁴ On the other hand, the Balkan intellectuals who were starting their national awakening, were concerned with the future boundaries of their potential nation-states and the ethnic boundaries of their national groups. Once again, the geographical term Macedonia, which was not applied for centuries to the lands of the ancient Macedones emerged in the national rhetoric of Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian nationalists. Due to its central location, in the middle of the Balkan peninsula, Macedonia became one of the most

⁴³ Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 39-41.

⁴⁴ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 7.

contested regions in the Balkans. The future of Macedonia became known as “the Macedonian Question” in the 19th century and particularly after 1870, when the Bulgarian autocephalous church was re-created.⁴⁵ History, linguistics, schools, church, armed bands and government propaganda were part of the arsenal of each of the involved Balkan countries.

In the 19th century, Macedonia was administratively divided into three large *vilayets* (big provinces): Salonica, Bitola and Kosovo, which were subdivided into 12 *sancaks*. According to the 1881 Ottoman Census, the total population of the three vilayets was 2,879,634, who belonged to a number of different ethnic and religious groups: Muslims, including Turks, Albanians and Pomaks, as well as Greeks, Slavs (including Bulgarians in the majority as well as a Serbian minority in the north), Jews, Vlachs, and Gypsies (Roma).⁴⁶

The Bulgarian nationalists had certain advantages in Macedonia, which they used to reach their goals of including the contested region within the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, and as part of the Bulgarian territory in 1878 during the San Stefano treaty negotiations. The Bulgarian national awakening in the 19th century was initiated by Bulgarian nationalists from Macedonia, a fact that would become an important advantage for the Bulgarian national doctrine. Regardless of the claims of virtually all F.Y.R.O.M. historians that such an argument is mere Bulgarian propaganda, the most respected historians and scholars, who work in the field of Balkan history confirm this argument. Ivo Banac refers to the national awakening in 19th century Macedonia as “undoubtedly a Bulgar affair,”⁴⁷ F.A.K. Yasamee, Elizabeth Barker, Charles and Barbara Jelavich and numerous

⁴⁵ Barker, “The Origin of the Macedonian Dispute,” 3.

⁴⁶ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 13.

⁴⁷ Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origin, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell U. Press, 1984), 35.

other renowned scholars also refer to Macedonia as one of the principal centres of the Bulgarian national awakening in the 19th century.⁴⁸

After the closing of the Ohrid Archbishopric in 1767, the church and the schools in Macedonia, as well as across the Ottoman Balkan territory, were under Greek control. The liturgies were only in Greek and the education was in Greek, which led to the Hellenization of many Slavic intellectuals. Thus, the Bulgarians viewed the opening of Bulgarian schools and the restoring of the Bulgarian autocephalous church as their immediate priorities. Paisii, a monk born in Bansko, Pirin Macedonia, who wrote the first Bulgarian history in 1762, asked rhetorically in his introduction: “Does any Greek abandon his language and kin? You, Bulgarian people, do not allow to be deceived, know your kin and learn your language!”⁴⁹

Despite Paisii’s call, however, in the 19th century, numerous Bulgarian intellectuals from Macedonia completed their education entirely in Greek. Thus, they considered the opening of Bulgarian schools and the publishing of Bulgarian books as crucial for the awakening of the emerging Bulgarian intellectuals, who were under strong Hellenic influence, as well as the wide illiterate masses of peasants, who rarely expressed any ethnic identity. There were numerous Bulgarian nationalists from Macedonia who were actively involved in the opening of Bulgarian schools in the region, but this dissertation will concentrate on the most famous historic figures, who continue to be contested between F.Y.R.O.M. and Bulgaria.

Dimitâr Miladinov (1810-1862), born in Struga, Vardar Macedonia graduated from a Greek high school, but under the influence of Russian and other Slavonic books, he turned

⁴⁸ F.A.K. Yasamee, “Nationality in the Balkans: The Case of the Macedonians,” In G. Ozdogan et al. *Balkans: A Mirror of the New World Order* (Istanbul: EREN, 1995), 125-7; Barker, Barker, *Macedonia: Its Place in Balkan Power*, 7-16; Jelavich and Jelavich, *Establishment of the Balkan National States*, 207-11.

⁴⁹ Paisii Hilendarski, *Istoriya Slavyanobâlgarska* [A Slavonic-Bulgarian History] (Sofia: Prosveta, 1997), 5.

into a fanatical Bulgarian nationalist and became an eminent figure of the Bulgarian Revival. As an active fighter for public education of the Bulgarians and for their spiritual and political awakening, he taught in Struga, Ohrid, Kilkis and Prilep, where he introduced the Bulgarian language into the schools and thus, replaced the Greek language, which had previously been the medium of instruction. His most famous literary achievement was the publishing of a large collection of Bulgarian folk songs in Zagreb in 1861 under the title *Bulgarian Folk Songs*.⁵⁰ He published the volume with his brother Konstantin (1830-1862) and even though most of the songs were from Macedonia, the authors disliked this term as too Hellenic and preferred to refer to Macedonia as the “Western Bulgarian lands.”⁵¹

Kuzman Shapkarev (1834-1908) from Ohrid, a teacher and author of numerous Bulgarian grammars and textbooks, wrote as late as 1888 in a letter to Prof. Marin Drinov that the “term Macedonian was imposed on us by the Greeks merely 10-15 years ago [...] but the common people prefer to call themselves merely Bulgarians.”⁵² Kiril Psychinovich (1771-1845), born near Tetovo, Vardar Macedonia referred to Macedonia as “Lower Moesia” in his book *Ogledalo* [Mirror], published in Budapest, in 1816.⁵³

Psychinovich, as well as Grigor Parlichev (1830-1893) from Ohrid and Neofit Rilski (1793-1881) from Bansko, who wrote the first Bulgarian grammar, insisted on the introduction of a literary Bulgarian language based on the 19th century spoken language, which they called “simple” or “common Bulgarian” as opposed to the archaic literary old

⁵⁰ Dimitâr and Konstantin Miladinovi, *Bolgarski Narodni Pesni* [Bulgarian Folk Songs] (Skopje: Jugoreklam, 2000).

⁵¹ *Ibid*, III.

⁵² Kosta Tzârnušanov, *Makedonizmât i sâprotivata na Makedonija sreshtu nego* [The Macedonianism and the Resistance in Macedonia Against It] (Sofia, 1992), 34-5.

⁵³ Janette Sampimon, *Becoming Bulgarian* (Amsterdam: Pegasus Oost Europe Studies, 2006), 119.

Church Slavonic.⁵⁴ Such fervent Bulgarian nationalists opened hundreds of Bulgarian schools across Macedonia.⁵⁵

Rayko Zhinzifov (1839-1877) from Veles, Vardar Macedonia became the bard of the Bulgarian Revival and one of the enthusiastic supporters of the idea that the traditional Bulgarian lands included Moesia, Thrace and Macedonia.⁵⁶ All reports from Austrian, British, French and other diplomats, who had offices in Macedonia, confirmed Zhinzifov's persuasion that in Vardar and Pirin Macedonia, the majority of the population was Bulgarian, whereas in Aegean Macedonia, the number of Greeks was significant.⁵⁷

The Bulgarian nationalists were encouraged by these diplomatic reports and the sentiments of the local population and they decided that an independent Bulgarian church should be the next step in the national revival, because the Ottoman Empire gave privileges to only religious and not ethnic groups under the millet system. The Bulgarian struggle for an independent church was initiated in the 1850s with the active participation of the Macedonian Bulgarians and was successfully completed by 1874. In the 1860s, the inhabitants of Veles, Skopje and Ohrid were constantly sending petitions to the Sultan to ask for Bulgarian Orthodox bishops and priests, who had to replace the Greek ones.⁵⁸ A group of Bulgarians from Kilkis, Aegean Macedonia, went even further. In 1859, 79 citizens of Kilkis and four priests signed a letter to Pope Pius IX, asking to join the Roman Catholic Church

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 119-120; Tzarnushanov, *The Macedonianism*, 30-48.

⁵⁵ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia, 1870-1913* (Boulder: East European Monographs/New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 78.

⁵⁶ Tzarnushanov, *The Macedonianism*, 79.

⁵⁷ Vesselin, Traykov, ed. *Britanski diplomatsicheski dokumenti po bǎlgarskiya nacionalen vǎpros, tom I* [British Diplomatic Documents on the Bulgarian National Question] (Sofia: BAN, 2006); ⁵⁷ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 22; Virginia Paskaleva, ed. *Makedoniya prez pogleda na avstriyski konsuli, 1851-1878, tom 1 (1851-1865)* [Macedonia Viewed by Austrian Consuls, 1851-1878, Vol. 1 (1851-1865)] (Sofia: MNI, 1994).

⁵⁸ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 29-34.

with the condition that they would be able to continue their Orthodox ceremonies unchanged and the language of church service would be Bulgarian.”⁵⁹

Due to the sometimes violent struggle for the Macedonian dioceses between the Greeks and the Bulgarians, the Sultan’s *firman* (decree) of 1870 that allowed the founding of a Bulgarian autocephalous Exarchate, included in Article 10 the provision that “the residents of a locality where two-thirds of the population chose the Exarchate could adhere to the Bulgarian Church.”⁶⁰ Initially only northeastern Macedonia was included in the jurisdiction of the restored Bulgarian autocephalous church, but after referendums in 1872 and 1874, 91% of the population of Skopje and 97% of the population of Ohrid voted for joining the Bulgarian Exarchate and thus, all of the territory of the modern F.Y.R.O.M. as well as Pirin Macedonia and northern Aegean Macedonia were included in the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate. The borders of the Exarchate would become a marker of the Bulgarian ethnic boundaries until the Balkan wars (1912-1913).⁶¹

Even though largely successful and supported by the Slavic population of Macedonia, the problem with the Bulgarian national doctrine was that Bulgarians wanted not merely part, but all of Macedonia. The Danish scholar Aarbakke, however, indicates that if Macedonia were to be divided geographically in the 1870s, after the church referenda, the northern zone from the Shar Mountains to the line Ohrid-Bitola-Strumica-Nevrokop in the south (i.e. the modern F.Y.R.O.M. and Pirin Macedonia) identified with the Bulgarian ethnicity and joined the Bulgarian Exarchate. The southern zone would reach Thessaloniki-Serres and Drama in which the Greek-speaking population prevailed, whereas the middle zone would include a

⁵⁹ Hristo Andonovski, *Vistinata za Egejska Makedonija* [The Truth about Aegean Macedonia] (Skopje: Misl, 1971), 22; Dimitâr Raykov. *Istoricheskata sâdba na Makedonskite bâlgari* [The Historical Fate of Macedonian Bulgarians] (Sofia: MNI, 1997), 190-6.

⁶⁰ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 29.

⁶¹ Tzarnushanov, *The Macedonianism*, 56-83.

mixture of Greek-speaking, Bulgarian-speaking, Vlach-speaking, Albanian speaking and Turkish-speaking inhabitants. Furthermore, when the Exarchate was founded, many non-Hellenic inhabitants of the southern zone, including ethnic Bulgarians and Arumanians (Vlachs) supported Hellenism and voted to stay within the jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarchate. Such people were called by the Bulgarian nationalists, *gârkomani* (literally Greek maniacs) and *patriarchists* (i.e. members of the Greek Patriarchate).⁶² The Bulgarian nationalists considered the *patriarchists* as traitors. The Greeks referred to them as ‘Bulgarophone Greeks’ in the 19th century, whereas in the 20th century, they preferred to call them ‘Slavophone Greeks’ in order to prevent Bulgarian irredentist claims.⁶³ Due to this mix of different ethnic groups, Ivo Banac calls Macedonia “the Macédoine of five nations.”⁶⁴

In order to acquire the whole geographic area of Macedonia, the Bulgarians used both ethnic and historical arguments swiftly applying a double standard. In order to win northwestern Macedonia, they used the historical argument that these lands were part of the two medieval Bulgarian empires, which left Bulgarian churches and monasteries around Tetovo, ignoring the fact that in the 19th century, there was a significant Albanian population in the area. On the other hand, in the struggle for Aegean Macedonia, the Bulgarians did not wish to use historical arguments, since Salonica had never been within the borders of the Bulgarian state. Thus, Bulgarians preferred to argue that, based on ethnic and linguistic statistics, they should acquire all of Aegean Macedonia, including Salonica, even though the Greeks were the majority ethnic group in the city. This approach of Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia to use statistics in order to further their nationalistic goals is referred as the “war of

⁶² Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry*, 22.

⁶³ Anastasia Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood: Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 106; Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Variation and Change* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 130-3.

⁶⁴ Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, 307.

statistics” by the Greek scholar Iakovos Michailidis.⁶⁵ Bulgarian armed bands and after 1893 Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) bands also attempted to support the Bulgarian national cause with incursions in Macedonia, not only to organize anti-Ottoman resistance, but also to harass patriarchists and ethnic Greeks.⁶⁶

Similar to the Bulgarians in the northern areas of Macedonia, the Greeks had an ethnic advantage in the south, in Aegean Macedonia, since all major cities- Salonica, Serres, Kilkis were predominantly Greek. The problem was that the villages around the cities, particularly the villages around Kilkis, Edessa and Florina were populated with ethnic Bulgarians, Turks and Arumanians (Vlachs). Thus, the Greek national doctrine also had to employ historical and ethnic arguments in order to gain ground in Macedonia. The Greeks had also an institutional advantage, because unlike Bulgaria, which did not have its own state until 1878, Greece won its independence in 1821. The new Greek government immediately opened Greek consulates in Salonica, Serres, Bitola and Skopje, whose main tasks were not only to protect Greek interests in the Ottoman Empire but also to increase the Hellenic influence in Macedonia.⁶⁷

History played an important role in the Greek national doctrine, because Macedonia was both part of the ancient Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great and the medieval Byzantine Empire for long periods of time. Thus, the Greeks resurrected the name Macedonia as something that was inherent to the Greek national heritage and psyche. At a public meeting in Athens, in 1895, after the Greek press announced the incursions in Macedonia of Bulgarian gangs, the Greek law professor Neokes Kazazis pointed out that: “If

⁶⁵ Iakovos D. Michailidis, “The War of Statistics: Traditional Recipes for the Preparation of the Macedonian Salad,” *East European Quarterly*, 37 (1), 1998, 9-21.

⁶⁶ Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry*, 59-60; George Papavizas, *Claiming Macedonia: The Struggle for the Heritage, Territory and Name of the Historic Hellenic Land, 1862-2004* (Jefferson, NC-London: McFarland, 2006), 41-2.

⁶⁷ Anthony Giza. *Balkanskite darzhavi i makedonskiya vapros*. [The Balkan States and the Macedonian Question]. (Sofia: Macedonian Scientific Institute, 2001), 47.

Macedonia is taken from us, we cannot exist... for Macedonia is the Acropolis, the vanguard of Hellenism.”⁶⁸

The Greeks also had 846 schools in Macedonia, some high schools and seminaries and by 1870, they also controlled all churches in the region. They used this network of educational, religious and cultural organizations to further their cause.⁶⁹ In 1894 in Athens, Pavlos Melas and other Greek officers founded a secret association called *Ethniki Hetairia* [National Company] with the main goal to awaken Greek national sentiments among Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. A member of the group noted in his memoirs: “We judged that the league must before all carry help to the Greeks of Macedonia, terrorized by the Bulgarian gangs, and that it is necessary to answer strength with strength.”⁷⁰

In order to boost their numbers, the Greek nationalists claimed that not only the *patriarchists*, but also all other inhabitants of Macedonia, including ethnic Albanians and Vlachs were proper Greeks, notwithstanding the fact that oftentimes these so called Bulgarophone Greeks, Vlachophone Greeks, and Albanian-speaking Greeks did not speak Greek and did not self-identify as Greeks.⁷¹ Hence, similar to the Bulgarians, the Greek nationalists used churches, schools, ethnic statistics and historical facts to further their cause, as well as mere propaganda in order to gain more ground in the region.

Regardless of their extreme ambition for acquiring the whole region of Macedonia with its ethnically diverse population, the Greek and Bulgarian nationalists could at least justify their claims with the ethnic sentiments of large portions of the Macedonian population, as well as linguistic evidence. The Serbs, however, were in the most

⁶⁸ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 55.

⁶⁹ Giza. *Balkanskite darzhavi* [The Balkan States], 48.

⁷⁰ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 55.

⁷¹ Ivan Ilchev, *Rodinata mi- Prava ili ne: vânsnopoliticheskata propaganda na balkanskite strani* [My Homeland: Just or Not: The Foreign Political Propaganda of the Balkan States] (Sofia: St. Clement of Ohrid U. Press, 1995), 503-5.

disadvantageous position of the three Balkan ethnic groups involved in the Macedonian Question. It was very difficult to bring historical, ethnic and linguistic arguments proving the overwhelming Serbian character of the region, when the vast majority of Slavonic intellectuals in Macedonia expressed a fanatic Bulgarian ethnonational identity. Thus, the Serbs claimed Macedonia later than the Greeks and the Bulgarians. Until the 1870s, the Serbs showed primarily a scholarly interest in Macedonia as part of Phase A in their national development.⁷²

During the first phase of scholarly interest (1820s-1870s), the Serbs supported the Bulgarian positions in Macedonia. In 1822 the Serbian folklorist and linguist, Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787-1864), published the first work containing grammatical facts about the Bulgarian language. His primary aim was to point out that the Bulgarian language existed, even though it was absent in the dictionaries published in Russia during the late 18th century which were deemed to contain all languages known at that time. In order to demonstrate that Bulgarian was an independent language, Karadžić used the Pirin Macedonian dialect of Razlog.⁷³ Serbian historians and journalists, including Stojan Novaković (1842-1915), Danilo Medaković (1819-1881), Luka Popović (1854-1909) and numerous others published books and articles in the Serbian press about the Bulgarian medieval kingdom of Samuel and the ethnic domination of Bulgarians in Macedonia.⁷⁴

Ilija Garašanin (1812-1874) a distinguished Serbian statesman and the main architect of Serbian state policy and national doctrine between 1843-1868 was the first Serb who indicated possible future Serbian claims to Macedonia. In 1844 he published a booklet

⁷² Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry*, 87.

⁷³ Raykov, *Istoricheskata sâdba* [The Historic Fate], 104-11.

⁷⁴ Kosta Tzarnushanov, *Serbian and Croatian Evidence of the Bulgarian Ethnicity in Macedonia*. (Sofia: Veritas et Pneuma, 1996).

entitled "Nachertanije" (Outline), describing future Serbian territorial ambitions. Considering the boundaries of the Serbian Empire of Stefan Dušan in the 14th century, Garašanin included Macedonia as part of the traditional Serbian lands of Old Serbia. But, at the same time, Garašanin also encouraged a diplomatic policy of strong support for Bulgarian revolutionary activity against the Turks. He referred to Bulgarians as "the most numerous branch of the Slavic community in Turkey."⁷⁵ In 1848 Garašanin sent the Bosnian Serb, Stefan Verković (1821-1893) to tour Macedonia and covertly collect ethnographic data to be ultimately used as support for long-term Serbian national policy. Unfortunately for Garašanin, after his tour Verković published his research in Belgrade, in 1860 under the title *Narodne Pesme Makedonski Bugara. Kniga I: Ženske Pesme* [Folk Songs of the Macedonian Bulgarians. Vol. 1: Women's Songs]. Furthermore, in the preface of the book, Verković wrote: "I call these songs Bulgarian and not Slavic, because if someone today should ask the Macedonian Slav "what are you?" he would be immediately told: "I am Bulgarian" and would call his language 'Bulgarian.'"⁷⁶ Hence, the Serbian attempts to collect ethnic and linguistic evidence for the support of the Serbian national cause in Macedonia failed.

In the early 1870s, the Serbian government decided to lead a more aggressive policy in Macedonia. The Serbian historian Miloš S. Milojević (1840-1897) created the basis of the theory that Macedonians were Serbs. He also claimed that "pure Serbs" lived across Bulgaria to the Black Sea coast.⁷⁷ Following Milojević's idea, Serbian nationalists created in August 1886 the "Association of Saint Sava" with the goal of encouraging the Serbian national

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 87.

⁷⁶ Stefan Verković, *Narodne Pesme Makedonski Bugara. Kniga I: Ženske Pesme* [Folk Songs of the Macedonian Bulgarians. Vol. 1: Women's Songs] (Belgrade, 1860/Skopje: Radko, 2001), III.

⁷⁷ Tzarnushanov, *Serbian and Croatian Evidence*, 96; Svetlozar Eldarov, *Srâbskata vâorâzhena propaganda v Makoedoniya* [The Serbian Armed Propaganda in Macedonia] (Sofia: St. George Military Publishing House, 1993), 5-9.

consciousness in 'Old Serbia.'⁷⁸ On 14th December 1888, Stojan Novaković, who served as the Serbian ambassador in Constantinople between 1885-1892, wrote to the Serbian Minister of Public Education Vladan Djordjević:

Since the Bulgarian idea, as it is well known to all, is deeply rooted in Macedonia, I think it is almost impossible to shake it completely by opposing it merely with the Serbian idea. This idea, we fear, would be incapable, as opposition pure and simple, of suppressing the Bulgarian idea. That is why the Serbian idea will need an ally that could stand in direct opposition to the Bulgarianism and would contain in itself the elements which could attract the people and their feelings and thus sever them from Bulgarianism. This ally I see in the Macedonism or to a certain extent in our nursing the Macedonian dialect and Macedonian separatism.⁷⁹

Novaković altered his initial Bulgarian position and he was the first scholar who pioneered the idea of a separate Macedonian ethnicity. This Macedonian ethnicity, however, had to be merely a temporary stage, which would alienate the Macedonian population from Bulgaria, and later would be completely assimilated by the Serbs. The Association of Serbo-Macedonians, created in 1886 by Serbian nationalists in Belgrade quickly embraced the ideas of Novaković and the political program of the association planned the publishing of a newspaper and other printed materials in the 'Macedonian language,' but since this language did not exist yet, the program authors recommended everything to be written with the Serbian Cyrillic alphabet, following the rules of Serbian grammar and the gradual replacing of Bulgarian phrases with Serbian ones.⁸⁰ The Serbian professors Spiridon Gopčević, Alexander Belić and Jovan Cvijić would continue the propaganda that Macedonian Slavs were latent Serbs until the Balkan Wars and Cvijić until the 1920s, when the Serbian government would replace its failed policy of promoting Macedonism with the claim that all

⁷⁸ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 58.

⁷⁹ Tzarnushanov, *Serbian and Croatian Evidence*, 96.

⁸⁰ Ivan Ilchev, *Rodinata mi* [My Homeland: Just or Not], 110-17.

Bulgarians in Vardar Macedonia were southern Serbs.⁸¹ The Serbs also built tens of Serbian schools in Macedonia and they gave scholarships to Macedono-Bulgarian students to study in Serbian universities. By 1889, the Serbian Government opened 42 elementary schools in Macedonia.⁸² Most students realized that the price of a Serbian scholarship had to be the acceptance of Serbian identity as well, and they moved to study in Sofia or St. Petersburg, where they could openly express their Bulgarian identity. Even Novaković, who travelled to St. Petersburg as a minister polipotentiary in 1900-1902 and attempted to agitate among the students from Macedonia, admitted that: “The Macedonian youth in its vast majority supports the Bulgarians.”⁸³

There were some Bulgarians, however, who joined the Serbian national cause, even if they were a minority. On 15 March, 1894, a group of Serbian nationalists attracted Krste Misirkov (1874-1926), a former pupil of the college of the Association of Saint Sava to join the Serbian association “Vardar”, which was promoting the study of Serbian history and language.⁸⁴ Later, Misirkov went to study in St. Petersburg on a Serbian scholarship and in 1903 he published in Sofia his book *Za Makedonskite Raboti (On Macedonian Matters)*, in which he claimed that there was a separate Macedonian nation and language. The book was written in his native Macedonian dialect, using the Russian alphabet, as well as a number of Russian words.⁸⁵ His book would be widely cited in the 20th and 21st centuries by all historians in the F.Y.R.O.M. as a clear indication of the existence of a separate Macedonian ethnicity. However, they ignored the fact that Misirkov abandoned his ideas, inspired by the

⁸¹ Eldârov, *Srâbskata vâorâzhena propaganda* [The Serbian Armed Propaganda], 25-47; Jovan Cvijić, *Balkansko poluostrvo i južnoslovenske zemlje* [The Balkan Peninsula and the South Slav Countries]. Belgrade: Savoy za izdavanje udžbenika, 1966.

⁸² Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry*, 88.

⁸³ Tzarnushanov, *Serbian and Croatian Evidence*, 72.

⁸⁴ Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 59.

⁸⁵ Krste Misirkov, *Za Makedonskite raboti*. [On Macedonian Matters]. Skopje: INI, 1974.

Serbian government, and in 1910 in the *Bulgarian Almanac*, as well as in his memoirs, Misirkov clearly indicated his Bulgarian ethnic identity.⁸⁶ The other favorite author of F.Y.R.O.M. historians would become Georgi Pulevski (1838-1895), who published in Belgrade his book *A Dictionary of Three Languages- Macedonian, Albanian, and Turkish*. He stated that “The Macedonians are a nation and their place is Macedonia.”⁸⁷ The book was published with the financial support of the Serbian government. The Serbs merely took advantage of Pulevski, who went to work in Serbia as a mason. He moved to Bulgaria to become a volunteer in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 and after the war, he openly declared his ethnicity as Bulgarian from the Bulgarian village of Galichnik, near Debar, Macedonia.⁸⁸

The Serbs also used military bands, which harassed the local population and in fact the uncle of Blaže Koneski, Gligor Ljame-Sokolović was one of the first Serbian leaders of armed gangs that harassed the local Bulgarian population. Such ethnic Bulgarians, who joined the Serbian nation would be called by the Bulgarian government *sârbomani* (literally Serbian maniacs, equal to traitors).⁸⁹

Despite active Serbian propaganda, however, the Serbian national doctrine did not find many supporters in Macedonia during the 19th century. As a matter of fact, it failed during the 20th century as well. The Belgrade University professor Sima Tomić (1866-1903), who was sent by the Serbian government on three consecutive occasions to Macedonia

⁸⁶ Tzarnushanov, *The Macedonianism*, 76; Dimitrov, *The Ten Lies of Macedonism*, 55-8; -----, “Misirkov’s Memoirs Found”, *The Standard*, Sofia, 31 January, 2007, 3.

⁸⁷ Victor A. Friedman, “Macedonian historiography, Language, and Identity in the Context of the Yugoslav Wars of Succession” In Christina Kramer and Brian Cook, eds. *Guard the Work Well Bound: Proceedings of the Third North American-Macedonian Conference on Macedonian Studies* (Indiana Slavic Studies, Volume 10, 1999), 74.

⁸⁸ Central Directory of National Archives, Sofia, folder 708 (1), file 397- Georgi Pulevski.

⁸⁹ Dragni Dagnev, *Skopskata Ikona Blaže Koneski: Makedonski Lingvist ili Srâbski Politrabotnik* [The Skopje Icon Blaže Koneski: A Macedonian Linguist or a Serbian Propagandist] (Sofia: Macedonian Scientific Institute, 1998), 1-10.

(1899, 1900 and 1901) with the overt mission of gathering folklore and linguistic data, but on a secret mission of inspecting the success of Serbian propaganda in the region, concluded in his report that the Bulgarians had a significant majority in most towns of Vardar Macedonia. Furthermore, he stated that: “The first heralds of the Serbian idea in Macedonia are ethnic Vlachs or professional patriots for whom the Serbian idea was an anchor that would save them from the clerical stagnation.”⁹⁰

2.5: The Balkan Apple of Discord: Macedonia from Ilinden to WWII

During the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, the Ottoman Empire was defeated and the peace treaty between Russia and the Ottoman Empire was negotiated and signed on 3rd March 1878 in San Stefano, near Constantinople. According to the treaty, Bulgaria acquired the whole territory from the Danube River to the Aegean Sea, including the whole region of Macedonia, except for Salonica. The British and the Austrians opposed this arrangement, because they believed that such a big Slavic state would soon become a Russian puppet in the Balkans and, as a result, on 13 July 1878 in Berlin, the European Great Powers – Britain, France, Austria-Hungary and Russia, with Germany as a mediator – signed the Treaty of Berlin, which split San Stefano Bulgaria into three parts: the Principality of Bulgaria, which included the area between the Danube and the Balkan mountains, the territory south of the Balkan mountains would become Eastern Rumelia- an autonomous province within the Ottoman Empire, and Macedonia was merely returned to the sultan without any autonomous status. The territorial partition became a national tragedy for the Bulgarian nationalists and government. Thus, one of the major goals of a number of consecutive Bulgarian

⁹⁰ Tzarnushanov, *Serbian and Croatian Evidence*, 103.

governments would be the restoration of the San Stefano borders, which were considered to be the natural boundaries of the Bulgarian people.⁹¹

Meanwhile, a significant wave of Bulgarian refugees from Macedonia, including a large number of intellectuals moved to Bulgaria. By the end of the First World War, there were over 500,000 Bulgarian refugees from Macedonia, who settled across Bulgaria.⁹² These Macedono-Bulgarians played a very important role in the political and cultural life of Bulgaria. As Keith Brown pointed out: “In Bulgaria, the organizations of Macedonian refugees played a vital role in keeping public attention focused on the historical injustice of Versailles, which they claimed had ignored the essential Bulgarian identity of Ottoman Macedonia’s entire Christian population.”⁹³ Dimitâr Blagoev (1856-1924) from Aegean Macedonia founded the Bulgarian Workers’ Socialist Democratic Party, a predecessor of the Communist Party; Georgi Dimitrov’s parents came from Vardar Macedonia, Andrey Lyapchev (1866-1933), born in Resen, Vardar Macedonia, was one of the founders of the Democratic party, minister in a number of Bulgarian governments and prime minister of Bulgaria (1926-31), to name but a few major figures. The list of Bulgarian generals, scientists, historians, poets and writers born in Macedonia could be the subject of a 300-page reference book.⁹⁴ In fact, every third modern ethnic Bulgarian, including the author of this thesis, can trace their ancestors to Macedonia, because of the large refugee waves in the first

⁹¹ Richard J. Crampton, *A Short History of Modern Bulgaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 19.

⁹² Christ Anastasoff, ed. *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia: A Symposium* (Indianapolis: The Central Committee of the MPO of the USA and Canada, 1945), 27.

⁹³ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 42-3.

⁹⁴ Kamen Stanev, *Makedonskite bezhanci v Bâlgariya: Uchastnici v neyniya politicheski I kulturen zhivot* [The Macedonian Refugees in Bulgaria: Participants in its Political and Cultural Life] (Sofia: MNI, 2001), 50-310.

half of the 20th century. They came from all parts of Macedonia, reaching more than 500,000 refugees, while Bulgaria had a population of only 2,000,000 in the same period.⁹⁵

By the 1890s, a new generation of Bulgarian intellectuals, educated in Bulgaria proper, took the leadership of the Slavonic population in Macedonia. They created IMARO (Internal Macedono-Adrianople Revolutionary Organization) in 1893. Among them were Hristo Tatarchev, Goce Delchev and other Macedono-Bulgarian nationalists, educated in Bulgaria. F.A.K. Yasammee managed to summarize the main goals of the new organization:

Formally, IMRO did not seek Macedonia's annexation to Bulgaria, but only Macedonia's autonomy - a point which has encouraged misleading suggestions that IMRO viewed the Slavs of Macedonia as an independent "Macedonian" nation, ethnically separate from the Bulgarians. In reality, IMRO never questioned the Bulgarian national identity of the Macedonian Slavs; its apparent preference for autonomy over annexation was essentially a matter of political tactics, and at most, implied a recognition that the presence of numerous non-Bulgarians in Macedonia might render outright annexation to Bulgaria impractical.⁹⁶

In 1895, a group of Macedono-Bulgarians living in Bulgaria created in Sofia the Supreme Macedonian Committee and they considered the outright integration of Macedonia to Bulgaria as a better solution than the gradual liberation and integration of the region into Bulgaria. Due to the name of their organization, they were called *supremacists* or in Bulgarian *varhovisti*.⁹⁷ Macedonian historians would develop the thesis after 1945 that the *varhovisti* were "greater Bulgarian chauvinists," whereas the IMARO activists were the "real Macedonian patriots."⁹⁸ All historical facts disprove this thesis. The American missionary Miss Stone, who was kidnapped in 1901 by Jane Sandanski and his rebels in the Pirin Mountains, however, also confirmed the Bulgarian identity of the IMARO activists as an eye-witness: "The young men considered themselves Bulgarian, yet chose to pursue

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹⁶ Yasammee, "Nationality in the Balkans," 127.

⁹⁷ Banac, *The National Question*, 314.

⁹⁸ Hristo Andonov-Poljanski, *Goce Delčev* (Pula, Croatia: Istarska Naklada, 1985);

autonomy, because they thought a free Macedonia would be more acceptable to the Great Powers of Europe.”⁹⁹

In order to attract other ethnicities to the organization, in 1902, the new charter of IMARO removed the original Article 3, which required all members to be ethnic Bulgarians. Instead, all inhabitants of Macedonia, regardless of their ethnicity could join IMARO.¹⁰⁰ This policy shift, however, was not very successful, since the only non-Bulgarian members that were attracted were some ethnic Vlachs.¹⁰¹ Mihail G. Ristić, the Serbian consul-general in Bitola also noticed this move of the IMARO leadership. He wrote in a report of 23rd January 1903: “Until a year ago, the activity of the committees had an exclusively Bulgarian character, they carried the Bulgarian national flag [...] Recently, they raised the flag of the Christians in general in their fighting for the common cause [...], but we should not forget that they will always remain Bulgarian committees.”¹⁰²

In July of 1903, the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising broke out in Macedonia and Thrace. Independent administrations were established by the rebels in Macedonia and Thrace, but the Bulgarian government refused to intervene, even though it informally fostered the rebellion, and the Turks crushed the revolt, killing almost 2,000 people. The last of the significant leaders of the Uprising – Dame Gruev – died one 23 December, 1906 in a fight with Turkish soldiers. The Turkish Press described him as the “biggest leader of the Bulgarian Revolutionary Committee.”¹⁰³ French, Austrian, Russian, American and British consuls and ambassadors reported to their governments the preparation and the crushing of

⁹⁹ Teresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair: America's First Modern Hostage Crisis* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 112.

¹⁰⁰ Angelos Chotzidis, Basil Gounaris and Anna A. Panayatopoulou, *The Events of 1903 in Macedonia as Presented in European Diplomatic Correspondence* (Thessaloniki: Balkan Studies Institute, 1993), 15.

¹⁰¹ Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians?*, 52-7.

¹⁰² Tzarnushanov, *Serbian and Croatian Evidence*, 106.

¹⁰³ Cocho Bilyarski, *Dame Gruev: Spomeni. Korespondenciya*. [Dame Gruev: Memoirs, Correspondence] (Sofia: Parnas-96, 1999), 16.

the Ilinden Uprising and described it as a Bulgarian event. The Turks themselves described the uprising as a Bulgarian conspiracy.¹⁰⁴ Frederick Moore, who, according to Keith Brown, was the only European journalist who managed to reach Kruševo immediately after the Ilinden Uprising, described the majority of the Kruševo population as Wallachian, joined by a colony of Bulgarians.¹⁰⁵ There are three other famous accounts on the Ilinden Uprising, written by a Bulgarian and two Greeks. The account of the Macedono-Bulgarian author Nikola Kirov-Mayski is very popular in the FYROM and it is one of the primary sources on the rebellion, even though, similar to the two Greek accounts, Kirov-Mayski mentions Bulgarians, Vlachs and Greeks, but no ethnic Macedonians, who participated in the rebellion.¹⁰⁶ In fact, as late as the 1990s, when the anthropologist Keith Brown went to Kruševo to interview the local Vlachs, he was surprised to discover that: “their language has no way to distinguish ‘Macedonian’ and ‘Bulgarian’ as ethnic terms, using *v’rg’ri* to translate both.”¹⁰⁷

As a result of the quashed rebellion, a new wave of Macedonian and Thracian refugees went to Bulgaria.¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, in the period 1900-1913, the war of statistics among the Balkan countries over Macedonia continued. Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian claims differed greatly over the numbers of the ethnic groups in Macedonia. Figure 1 illustrates the competing claims.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 18; Aleksandar Stojanovski, ed. *Turski Dokumenti za Ilindenskoto Vostanie* [Turkish Documents for the Ilinden Uprising] (Skopje: Archives of Macedonia, 1993). -----, *100 Godini Ilindensko-Preobrazhensko Vastanie* [100 Years Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising] (Sofia: BAN and Paradigma: 2005), 35-596; Nikolova Zlatina, *Anglijskiyat Peachat za Ilindiensko-Preobrazhenskoto Vâstanie* [The English Press for the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising of 1903] (Sofia: “Marin Drinov”, 1998).

¹⁰⁵ Brown, *The Past in Question*, 12.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 79-102.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹⁰⁸ Crampton, *A Short History*, 47-50; Anastasoff, *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*, 22;

Figure 1: Ethnic Composition of Macedonia, 1899-1905 (Source: Kertzer, David I. and Dominique Arel, eds. *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, 22)

| <i>Ethnic group By percentage</i> | <i>Bulgarian Census Figures</i> | <i>Serbian Census Figures</i> | <i>Greek Census Figures</i> | <i>Turkish Census Figures</i> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bulgarians | 52.3% | 2.0% | 19.3% | 30.8% |
| Serbians | 0.0 | 71.4 | 0.0 | 3.4 |
| Greeks | 10.1 | 7.0 | 37.9 | 10.6 |
| Albanians | 5.7 | 5.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Turks | 22.1 | 8.1 | 36.8 | 51.8 |
| Others | 9.7 | 5.9 | 6.1 | 3.4 |
| Total | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

The comparison of figures indicates some interesting trends. The Bulgarian sources included all Bulgarian-speakers in Macedonia as ethnic Bulgarians, regardless of the fact that the Pomaks as Muslims often sided with the Turks, whereas the Patriarchists had a Greek national identity. The Turks included in their numbers all Muslims in Macedonia, i.e. Albanians and Pomaks, as well as Turks, because they considered religion as the primary identity marker. The Serbian figures are preposterous and they reflect the Serbian claims that all Slavs in Macedonia were Serbs, whereas the Greek figures underestimated the number of Bulgarians and did not include Albanians, which is probably due to the fact that the Albanians were added to the Turkish group on a religious basis. Macedonian was not included as category, since the local population had not developed such a national identity. Thus, the region could not be divided easily along ethnic lines.

The Young Turk Revolution of 1908 afforded some respite, offering the Bulgarians in Macedonia some opportunities for legal political activity and representation in the Ottoman parliament. The left-wing elements around Yane Sandanski created the People's

Federation Party, which wanted to turn the Ottoman Empire into a federal state, whereas the right-wing Macedono-Bulgarians founded the political party Bulgarian Constitution Club.¹⁰⁹

In March 1912, Serbia and Bulgaria signed an agreement for the division of Macedonia in order to take advantage of the weakening Ottoman Empire. Initially, the Bulgarian representatives supported the idea of proclaiming an independent Macedonia with the strong belief that it would later join Bulgaria, similar to Eastern Rumelia. The Serbian government, however, suspected the Bulgarian intentions and vehemently opposed them. As George B. Zotiades observed, the autonomy/independence card: “was particularly a Bulgarian policy in times of defeat, as soon as they could occupy these territories, they abandoned all these games of Macedonian autonomy and independence.”¹¹⁰ With the mediation of Russia, an agreement was achieved and the Bulgarian government agreed to give to Serbia the Shar mountain area in northern Vardar Macedonia, which was the so called contested zone, whereas Bulgaria would take the rest of Vardar and Pirin Macedonia. Bulgaria also signed a treaty with Greece. The Greek-Bulgarian treaty was purely defensive, because both countries wanted Salonica and could not reach an agreement on the city. At the same time Serbia and Greece negotiated secretly the partition of Macedonia between them. Following the Serbian-Greek agreement, Serbia occupied all of Vardar Macedonia after the start of the war with Turkey, except Strumica, whereas Greece occupied the whole region of Aegean Macedonia. After the defeat of the Turks both countries refused to withdraw their armies from these territories. The frustrated Bulgarian tsar Ferdinand I declared war on both Greece and Serbia and thus, initiated the Second Balkan war. While Bulgaria was fighting

¹⁰⁹ Fikret Adanir, “The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire, 1878-1912”, in Andreas Kappeler, Fikret Adanir and Alan O’Day, eds, *Comparative Studies on Governments and Nondominant Ethnic Groups in Europe, 1850-1940*, Vol. 6 (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Anthony Giza, *Balkanskite darzhavi I Makedonskiya Vapros* [The Balkan Countries and the Macedonian Question] (Sofia: MNI, 2001), 54-8.

¹¹⁰ George B. Zotiades, *The Macedonian Controversy* (Salonica: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1961), 23.

with its former allies Serbia and Greece, Romania and Turkey also invaded Bulgaria and the Bulgarian army was quickly defeated. All belligerents signed the Treaty of Bucharest on 10th August 1913, which secured Serbian and Greek territorial gains, whereas Bulgaria had to also give up Adrianople to Turkey and southern Dobrudja to Romania.¹¹¹ Bulgaria sided with the Central Powers during the First World War, which promised to Bulgaria the whole region of Macedonia. In September 1915 the Bulgarian army entered Vardar Macedonia and advanced toward Serbia proper and Aegean Macedonia. According to Greek sources, the Bulgarian army killed 50,000 Greeks and the Bulgarian army was conducting a systematic ethnic cleansing of Greeks and Serbian settlers in Aegean and Vardar Macedonia.¹¹² The ethnic Bulgarian population of Vardar Macedonia was jubilant after the entering of the Bulgarian army in Serbian Macedonia and readily joined the Bulgarian administration and military units. As a matter of fact, during the Balkan wars of 1912-13 and the First World War, IMARO activists joined the Bulgarian army and administration in Macedonia and they merely dissolved IMARO, since they thought that the ultimate goal – integration of Macedonia within Bulgaria – was achieved.¹¹³ Germany and Austria-Hungary, however, lost the war and in the fall of 1918 Anglo-French military units defeated the Bulgarian army near Salonica. The Treaty of Neuilly, signed in November 1919 not only restored the pre-war borders but also penalized Bulgaria with new transfers of territory to Greece and Serbia. The British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, who was actively involved in the Versailles negotiations, stated in his memoirs that: “By many authorities the most tragic instance of minority oppression in violation of the 1919 Treaty is held to be that of the 600,000

¹¹¹ George W. White, *Nationalism and Territory: Constructing Group Identity in Southeastern Europe*. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 235-6; Jelavich and Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan*, 217-21.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 18.

¹¹³ Milen Kumanov, *Makedoniya: Kratâk istoricheski spravochnik* [Macedonia: A Short Historical Guidebook] (Sofia: Tina Press, 1993), 58.

MAP 2: The Division of Macedonia in 1913 (Source: Bojyadjiev, Stoyan. *Makedoniya pod srabsko igo, 1913-1941* [Macedonia under Serbian Yoke] Sofia: MNI, 1996)



Macedonians now resident within the borders of Yugoslavia. Of this community an overwhelming majority are of Bulgarian stock and language, in other words Bulgaro-Macedonians.”¹¹⁴

The Bulgarian loss of the First World War was detrimental for the Bulgarian population of Macedonia. Within Greece, the Macedono-Bulgarians were designated "Slavophone Greeks", while within Yugoslavia, they were officially treated as "South

¹¹⁴ David Lloyd George, "Memoirs of the Peace Conference," Vol. 2, 901-2 in Anastasoff, *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*, 103.

Serbs". The Greeks changed the Bulgarian names of all villages into Greek names and they Hellenized the names of all Slavonic inhabitants of Macedonia and Thrace.¹¹⁵

Quite understandably, there were no name changes in Bulgaria, because the Macedonian refugees who fled there had Bulgarian names and Bulgarian ethnic identity. The harsh Greek policies, however, worsened relations between both countries and in the early 1920s Greece and Bulgaria were on the brink of war. The League of Nations forced both countries to the negotiating table and in 1924 the Bulgarian and Greek foreign ministers signed in Geneva the Kalfov-Politis Protocol. The Protocol facilitated an exchange of population between Bulgaria and Greece and the Greeks officially recognized the local population of Aegean Macedonia as ethnic Bulgarians. In accordance with this protocol, ethnic Greeks from Bulgaria moved to Greece, whereas ethnic Bulgarians from Aegean Macedonia and Thrace moved to Bulgaria. The Serbs vehemently protested, since they considered the local population as southern Serbs. In order to appease the Serbs, the Greek government annulled the Kalfov-Politis Protocol and signed in 1925 a Greek-Serbian treaty, which recognized the population of Aegean Macedonia as a Serbian minority.¹¹⁶

The Greek government published in 1925 the ABECEDAR in the Bitola-Florina dialect due to its obligation to the Peace Treaty of Sevres of 1920. The primer never became available to the local Slavonic population, however, and after General Ioannis Metaxas imposed his dictatorship in 1936, standard Bulgarian and its Macedonian dialects were completely forbidden.¹¹⁷ The Greeks were assimilating their minorities with the help of

¹¹⁵ Ivan Katardjiev. *Macedonia and its Neighbours* (Skopje: Menora, 2001), 22.

¹¹⁶ Hristo Andonovski, *Diplomatskata Antimakedonska Igra* [The Diplomatic Anti-Macedonian Game] (Skopje: Mislra, 1969), 44-5; Stanev, *Makedonskite bezhanci* [The Macedonian Refugees], 10-35.

¹¹⁷ Katardjiev. *Macedonia*, 41;

refugee waves, similar to the Bulgarians. 638,000 ethnic Greek refugees came from Asia Minor to Greece and most of them were settled in Thrace and Aegean Macedonia.¹¹⁸

The Serbian government, however, had the cruellest policy towards Macedonia. It forbade the local population from reading and writing in Bulgarian and to express their Bulgarian identity. The Serbian government even banned the name Macedonia and called the region Vardar Banovina [province]. The Serbian administration ejected the Bulgarian Orthodox clergy, closed all Bulgarian schools, banned all publications in Bulgarian and changed all Bulgarian names of the local population to Serbian family name -ić endings. The resistance to this forcible cultural and linguistic assimilation led to the expulsion or flight to Bulgaria of a large proportion of the Macedono-Bulgarian intelligentsia. As Nikola Achkov notes, this was a strong indication that the Serbian government abandoned the theory of Novaković for the creation of a Macedonian nation and language, which would gradually turn into Serbian. Instead, the new government accepted the thesis of the Serbian nationalist, historian and geographer Jovan Cvijić and, following his ideas, the new Serbian administration proclaimed that only southern Serbs lived in Macedonia.¹¹⁹ The International Committee for Political Prisoners of New York wrote a letter of protest to the Yugoslav Minister in Washington D.C. on 6th May, 1931 in which they confirmed the Bulgarian allegations to the Serbian government: “Since 1918 [...] the use of the Bulgarian language is forbidden and even possession of a Bible in Bulgarian is a crime. [...] Macedonia, with a population of 1 million inhabitants supports a police force of 11,000, whereas the rest of Yugoslavia with 12,000,000 inhabitants has only 4,000 policemen.”¹²⁰ The situation was so

¹¹⁸ Andonovski, *Diplomatskata* [The Diplomatic], 71.

¹¹⁹ Nikola Achkov, *Makedoniya v nashata istoriya* [Macedonia in Our History] (Sofia: Vasil Stanilov Publishers, 2003), 148.

¹²⁰ Anastasoff, *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*, 197.

unbearable that literally hundreds of petitions and thousands of letters were sent to the League of Nations by Macedono-Bulgarians, who wanted to expose the brutal Serbian crimes against ethnic Bulgarians in Macedonia.¹²¹ In the short period 1911-1926, 1600 Macedono-Bulgarians were killed by the Serbian authorities and 30,000 were jailed as political prisoners.¹²²

In 1919, Todor Aleksandrov, Ivan Mihaylov (both born in Novo Selo, Vardar Macedonia) and the Bulgarian general Aleksandar Protogerov (born in Ohrid) resurrected IMARO under the name IMRO – Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization. The new leadership participated in supporting illegal Bulgarian organizations in Vardar Macedonia, as well as in writing of petitions and protest letters to the international community. The IMRO leadership quickly realized that the legal means of protest were futile and they then decided to resort to political assassinations. Numerous Serbian political figures were assassinated by Bulgarian nationalists under the orders of IMRO. The killing of the Serbian official Velimir Prelić by Mara Buneva on 14th January 1928 in Skopje as a punishment for his police torture methods of Macedono-Bulgarian students and the assassination in Marseille of the Yugoslav king Alexander I on 9th October 1934 by Vlado Chernozemski were among the numerous IMRO assassinations that were followed by brutal Serbian reprisals in Macedonia.¹²³ IMRO regarded the assassinated king as one of the main culprits of the Serbian cruelties in Macedonia. Alexander I shocked and infuriated the general Bulgarian public as early as 1913

¹²¹ -----, *The Complaints of Macedonia: Memoranda, Petitions, Resolutions, minutes, Letters and Documents, Addressed to the League of Nations, 1919-1939, Vol. 1-4.* Geneva: International Documentation on Macedonia, 2001.

¹²² Tzârnušanov, *Makedonizmât* [The Macedonianism], 175.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 185-7.

when he visited a school in Skopje and asked a school girl in Serbian: “What are you?” The girl Vaska Zoycheva answered: “Bulgarian” and he slapped her face.¹²⁴

On the other hand, within the IMRO itself rivalries and arguments over its policies led to the creation of various factions, which also resorted to assassinations to solve their arguments. These rivalries triggered a fratricidal war between the IMRO factions in the 1920s and 1930s, which claimed hundreds of victims. The Macedonian historian Ivan Katardjiev paid attention to another aspect of the IMRO activities – its ties with the Bulgarian government. Katardjiev pointed out that: “Bulgarian nationalism in 1919 helped the creation of IMRO, led by Todor Alexandrov and Vancho Mihaylov. It was financed and kept alive by the Bulgarian state.”¹²⁵ Due to continuous assassinations within IMRO, however, many people felt relieved when colonels Damian Velchev and Kimon Georgiev came to power in 1934 and banned all political parties, including IMRO. The colonels’ political group, called Zveno [Link] looked for rapprochement with Yugoslavia and they promised the Yugoslav government to disarm IMRO. The Bulgarian authorities confiscated all arms of IMRO and dissolved the organization without any resistance. The IMRO leader Ivan Mihaylov ordered his activists not to resist this Bulgarian government campaign, even if they hated the new government, because he did not want a civil war that could lead to the shedding of more Bulgarian blood. In Mihaylov’s words, such a development could make only the Serbian archenemy happy. The legendary IMRO leader Mihaylov stated: “The Macedono-Bulgarians had never prepared to kill their Bulgarian brothers.”¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Stoyan Boyajiev, *Makedoniya pod srâbsko igo, 1913-1941* [Macedonia under Serbian Yoke, 1913-1941] (Sofia: MNI, 1996), 5.

¹²⁵ Ivan Katardjiev, *Macedonia and its Neighbours*, 35.

¹²⁶ Balkanikus, *Makedonskata Osovoboditelna Borba I Prevrata ot 19 May, 1934 v Bâlgariya* [The Macedonian Liberation Struggle and the Coup of 19th May, 1934 in Bulgaria] (Indianapolis: MPO, 1936), 18.

The Bulgarian communists, however, actively promoted the emergence of a separate Macedonian national identity. The Bulgarian Communist Party, founded in 1919 under the leadership of Dimitar Blagoev, an ethnic Bulgarian from the Aegean Macedonian village of Zagorichane, initially supported the establishment of an independent Macedonia as the first stage of its integration into Bulgaria. On the other hand, the Soviet communists promoted the idea of a Balkan federation, based on the Soviet model. In 1920, the Bulgarian communists Georgi Dimitrov and Vasil Kolarov, led the inaugural session of the Balkan Communist Federation in Paris. The position of the Balkan Communist Federation was endorsed at the May-June 1924 5th Comintern Congress, which decided that the Balkan Communist Parties “must support to the utmost the national-revolutionary movement of the oppressed nationalities of Macedonia and Thrace for the creation of independent republics.”¹²⁷ This game of creating small nations was inspired by Stalin, who hoped to absorb all these quasi-nations into his Soviet Empire. Stalin believed that encouraging of national rivalries would help him to attract massive support among disenchanted nationalists and workers to become communist supporters.¹²⁸ The Soviets, however, did not have a coherent policy on the Macedonian Question. As Joseph Rothschild pointed out: “The Soviet leaders demonstrated that far from having had a definite Macedonian policy based on principle, they simply considered the area as a prize to be awarded to their most promising and obedient pupil among the Balkan Communist Parties.”¹²⁹

The Bulgarian communist interest in a Balkan communist federation was replaced by domestic problems in Bulgaria and the Second World War, but it would re-emerge again

¹²⁷ Aristotle Tziampiris, *Greece, European Political Cooperation and the Macedonian Question* (Burlington, VT & Sydney: Ashgate, 2000), 45.

¹²⁸ Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav National Question* (New York and London: Columbia U. Press, 1968), 22.

¹²⁹ Joseph Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria: Origins and Development, 1883-1936* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 256.

after the end of the war. This idea was not very influential in Macedonia before the war. In the 1930s, however, the Comintern started to promote the thesis that Macedonians were a separate nation and the Comintern activists attempted to gain more support in Bulgaria. When cooperation with the existing IMRO factions failed, due to their anti-communism, the Comintern set up its own IMRO faction – IMRO United in 1925, which had to be a communist puppet. Dimitar Vlahov became its leader. The group, however never gained influence among the Macedonian population. Thus, in 1936-37, the organization dissolved and most of its members joined the Bulgarian Communist Party.¹³⁰

Following the Soviet position, a group of communists, most of them born in Macedonia, created in 1938 the Macedonian Literary Circle in Sofia, which existed until 1941. Its goal was to create an authentic Macedonian literature. Since the Macedonian language did not yet exist, the Statutes and By-laws of the literary circle were written in Bulgarian and yet they wanted to work for the development of a Macedonian literary language.¹³¹ Thus, it was evident that an increasing number of intellectuals were interested in promoting a new Macedonian nationality, even though they were under strong communist influence. Venko Markovski and Kole Nedelkovski from Vardar Macedonia were members of this circle and they published their poems in their local Macedonian dialect, instead of standard Bulgarian, which indicated their desire to create a Macedonian literary language.¹³²

During the Second World War Bulgaria joined the Axis powers and, on 19th April 1941, two days after the Yugoslav capitulation to Germany, the Bulgarian army entered Macedonia. Italy, however, occupied Western Macedonia, populated with primarily ethnic

¹³⁰ Shoup, *Communism*, 33; Kumanov, *Makedonija: Kratak istoricheski* [Macedonia: A Short Historical], 61; Decho Dobrinov, *VMRO Obedinena* [IMRO United], (Sofia: St. Clement of Ohrid University, 1993), 261-4.

¹³¹ Vasil Tocinovski, ed. *Makedonski Literaturen Kružok. Sofia, 1938-1941, Dokumenti, Izbor, Prevod, Redakcija I Beleški od Dr. Vasil Tocinovski* [Macedonian Literary Circle, 1938-1941, Documents, Selection, Translation, Editing and Notes by Dr. Vasil Tocinovski] (Skopje: Archives of Macedonia, 1995), 175-6.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 66.

Albanians and including the cities of Tetovo, Gostivar, Kičevo, Debar and Struga. Bulgarian schools, churches and cultural institutions were re-opened and Bulgarian once again became the official language. Many IMRO activists believed that the old dream of a united Macedonia, integrated into Bulgaria, was finally realized and many of them came back from exile to take prominent positions in the Bulgarian administration. Former *Ilindenci* (participants in the Ilinden Uprising) received Bulgarian state pensions for their patriotic act.¹³³ In June 1942 new legislation was passed offering Bulgarian citizenship to all ethnic Bulgarians living in Vardar and Aegean Macedonia. The Bulgarian administration did not have any policy towards the numerous minorities who lived in Macedonia – Albanians, Turks, Jews. The new rulers cared only about the ethnic Bulgarians. Thus, the Jews could not claim Bulgarian citizenship. This policy proved fatal for the Macedonian Jews. About 13,000 Jews from the new Bulgarian territories were deported to the Nazi death camps in Poland. The 51,000 Jews in Bulgaria proper, however, were Bulgarian citizens and survived the war in Bulgaria.¹³⁴

The local Macedono-Bulgarian population viewed the Bulgarian army as a liberator from the cruel Serbian rule. Thus, the ‘heroic Macedonian guerrilla struggle against the Bulgarian fascist occupiers’ was a myth created by Tito and his protégés in Vardar Macedonia. On 22nd June, 1941 the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party appealed to all Yugoslav peoples to start an armed uprising. Metodija Šatorov-Šarlo, the leader of the Macedonian Communist Party, called the Pokrajnski Committee, ignored Tito’s call and dissolved his regional committee, then joined the

¹³³ Brown, *The Past in Question*, 43-4; 138; Veselin Angelov, *Makedonskata Kârvava Koleda: Sâzdavane i Utvârzhdavane na Vardarska Makedoniya kato Republika v Yugoslavskata Federaciya* [The Macedonian Bloody Christmas: The Creation and Affirmation of Vardar Macedonia as a Republic in the Yugoslav Federation (1943-1946) (Sofia: Galik, 2003), 22.

¹³⁴ Hans-Joachim Hoppe, “Bulgarian Nationalities Policy in Occupied Thrace and Aegean Macedonia,” *Nationalities Papers*, 14 (1-2) 1986, 96-7.

Bulgarian Communist Party after almost a unanimous vote and moved his headquarters to Sofia in 1941. The Yugoslav agents sent by Tito – Lazar Koliševski and Dragan Pavlović-Šilja – were expelled by Šarlo from the Communist Party.¹³⁵

Tito, seriously concerned with the situation in Macedonia, in February 1943 sent to Macedonia his Montenegrin assistant Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo to subdue and return the Macedonian communists to the Yugoslav Communist party and to create an armed resistance against the Bulgarian army. He managed to create some partisan units, first in the Italian zone of western Macedonia, and later in the Bulgarian zone.¹³⁶ Tito wrote an open letter to the Macedonian communists in September 1941 to express his disappointment with them. He pointed out that: “While in the whole country [of Yugoslavia], there are fierce battles with the occupiers, Macedonia is peaceful, and the enemy there walks freely and feels safe, because no one bothers him.”¹³⁷ After his arrival in Macedonia in 1943, Tempo observed the desperate situation for the Yugoslavs and reported to Tito that the local communists thought that: “the Macedonian people were Bulgarians and that they were oppressed by the hegemony of Great Serbia and had to be transferred to Bulgaria.”¹³⁸ Thus, in order to organize guerrilla units, Tempo diplomatically explained to the Macedonian communists that the resistance was not against the Bulgarians per se, but against the fascist government of Bogdan Filov, who was the Bulgarian prime minister during the war.¹³⁹

On the other hand, the Greeks created an anti-Bulgarian resistance guerrilla movement immediately after the Bulgarian occupation of Aegean Macedonia with 14, 430

¹³⁵ Paul Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav Question* (New York and London: Columbia U. Press, 1968), 54-83.

¹³⁶ Angelov, *Makedonskata Kârvava Koleda* [The Macedonian Bloody Christmas], 28-9; Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav*, 83.

¹³⁷ Krste Crvekovski and Slavko Milosavljević. *Našiot Pogled za Vremeto na Koliševski* [Our View of Koliševski's Times] (Skopje: Misa, 1996), 36.

¹³⁸ Tzârnušanov, *Serbian and Croatian Evidence*, 146.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 147.

sq. km and 590,000 inhabitants. The Bulgarian military forces treated with enormous hostility and brutality the local Hellenic population. As early as September 1941, the Greek population in Aegean Macedonia revolted in Drama, Doxato and Kavalla. In order to quell the rebellion, the Bulgarian army started a massacre, which led to 15,000 Greek victims and another 200,000 were forced to leave Aegean Macedonia and move south.¹⁴⁰

In 1943 an increasing number of Aegean Slavic Macedonians joined the Greek Resistance units of EAM/ELAS. These people started to proclaim a separate Macedonian identity. In order to exploit the situation, the Greek Communist Party (KKE) founded the Slav Macedonian Popular Liberation Front (SNOF) in November of 1943. Many ethnic Bulgarians, who were initially collaborated with the Bulgarian occupation forces and were fearful of their future after the war, also declared themselves to be Macedonians and started to join SNOF in 1944.¹⁴¹

Tito realized that the interwar policy of violent Serbization was a complete fiasco. Also, Serbia had to be cut down in size in order to preserve the balance of power in the new socialist Yugoslavia. If Tito encouraged a Bulgarian identity, however, Bulgaria would continue with its irredentist claims. On the other hand, if Tito decided to upgrade the already existing regional Macedonian identity to a national identity, he could have the upper hand in the Balkans. Tito could claim Bulgarian and Greek territories (Pirin and Aegean Macedonia) under the pretence that he wanted to unite all Macedonians into one country. In fact, Tito was not concerned with the national identity of the Macedonian population. He merely wanted to dominate the Balkans.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Basil Kondis, "The 'Macedonian Question' as a Balkan Problem in the 1940s" *Balkan Studies*, 28 (1), 1987, 151-2.

¹⁴¹ Tziampiris, *Greece, Political Cooperation*, 46.

¹⁴² Liljana Panovska. *Krajot na edna iljuzija: Gragjanskata vojna vo Grcija I makedoncite (1946-1949)* [The End of an Illusion: The Greek Civil War and the Macedonians (1946-49)] (Skopje: INI, 2003), 197-8.

2.6: The Cold War: From Greek and Bulgarian Past to Macedonian Present

In order to muster some support for the creation of the new Macedonian nation in Vardar Macedonia, Tito decided to use the assistance of his faithful pro-Serbian protégés born in Vardar Macedonia. This included Blaže Koneski (1921-1993), Mihajlo Apostolski (1901-1987) and Lazar Koliševski (1914-2000), as well as the influence of Ilinden revolutionaries and Communists such as Pavel Shatev (1882 - 1951) and Panko Brashnarov (1883 - 1951) and the communist writer Venko Markovski (1915-1988). All were part of the 122 delegates who went to the Serbian monastery of St. Prohor Pčinjski for the first plenary session of the ASNOM (The Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia), which proclaimed on 2nd August, 1944 the founding of the Yugoslav People's Republic of Macedonia with the official language being Macedonian.¹⁴³ The Yugoslav Constitution of 1946 confirmed the existence of five nations (Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, Slovenes and Macedonians) and six republics, as Bosnia was added as a republic.¹⁴⁴

After the withdrawal of the Bulgarian army in September of 1944, Yugoslav partisan forces entered Macedonia and quickly started to purge all anti-Yugoslav elements. Tito's forces had to face a number of opponents: 1. The right wing Macedonians with Bulgarian identity, who still hoped to join Macedonia to Bulgaria. 2. The right wing Macedonians, who started to lobby for an independent Macedonia, existing outside Yugoslavia, with numerous official languages (Bulgarian, Greek, Albanian), similar to Switzerland. Thus, in the 1940s, for the first time, right wing groups and individuals demanded an independent Macedonia, even though they imagined it as a political and not an ethnic nation. 3. Macedonian communists, who were members of the local Communist Party of Shatorov and hence,

¹⁴³ James F. Clarke, *The Pen and the Sword*, 163.

¹⁴⁴ Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav*, 114.

collaborated with the Bulgarians and even expressed a Bulgarian identity. The right wing Bulgarian nationalists were attacked first. They were charged with treason and collaboration with the 'Bulgarian fascist occupiers.' The Skopje Martial Law Court was convened on Christmas of 1944 to sentence to death 12 people. On 7 January, there were mutinies in Skopje and Štip of pro-Bulgarian officers, which were quelled by Tempo and his Serbian forces with the execution of 70 officers, tens of soldiers and 900 were arrested. This incident was kept in absolute secret during the Cold War.¹⁴⁵

Furthermore, between April and August of 1945, the Court for the Defence of the Macedonian National Honour was set up by Yugoslav authorities, and its targets were Macedono-Bulgarian intellectuals who openly expressed their Bulgarian identity. Writers, lawyers, journalists, doctors, teachers, priests and other prominent people received death sentences or prison terms. Mayors and other administrators during the Bulgarian regime were sentenced to death. 1,260 prominent Macedono-Bulgarians were killed by these farce processes.¹⁴⁶ In 1946, Dimitar Gyuzelev, Yordan Chkartov and Dimitar Chkartov were sentenced to death, whereas seventy-four other Macedono-Bulgarian nationalists led by Angel Dimov were sentenced to jail for plotting to join Vardar Macedonia to Bulgaria.¹⁴⁷

The next major task was the codification of the Macedonian language, since all documents written by the Yugoslav communists were either in Serbian, or more rarely, in an incoherent mixture of Macedono-Bulgarian dialects. Tito left the task for the creation of the Macedonian alphabet and orthography to his faithful linguist Blaže Koneski, who initially resisted with the words: "But why should we create a Macedonian language?! Everybody

¹⁴⁵ Angelov. *Makedonskata Kârvava Koleda* [The Macedonian Bloody Christmas], 178-88.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 242-4; Tzârnušanov, *The Macedonianism*, 221-5.

¹⁴⁷ Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 118-9.

speaks Serbian in Macedonia!”¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, he had to follow Tito’s orders and as a trained linguist, fluent in Serbian and Bulgarian, he became the Chairman of the linguistic commission in 1944-45, which came up with a Macedonian alphabet on 3 May 1945. It was identical with the Serbian alphabet, except for the new letter *s*, which had to represent the consonant *dz*, found only in a handful of words. The Macedonian orthography became a reality on 7 June 1945 and the first Macedonian grammar appeared in 1952.¹⁴⁹ The central Macedonian dialect of Bitola-Veles was taken as the literary norm, as theoretically this dialect was equally distant from Bulgarian and Serbian. There were heated debates among the members of the Linguistic Commission. Koneski wanted the replacement of Bulgarian words with Serbian, as much as possible to maximally differentiate the new language from Bulgarian, whereas Venko Markovski opposed the total Serbianization of the language.

Georgi Kiselinov said during the Commission proceedings:

We do not have the time to wait for this language to be born. We are in great need of a literary language, and have no time, and cannot wait for this language to be made by poets, writers and journalists. In France, as a literary language, the Paris dialect is taken, in Russia – the Moscow dialect, in Serbia – the Herzegovina dialect. From these dialects a literary language has developed. But, as I have said, we have no time to wait for one of our dialects to be developed into a literary language.¹⁵⁰

In other words, the new language had to be created as quickly as possible. In order to differentiate it from the Bulgarian language, the stress of the words was accepted to be on the third syllable from the end of the word, regardless of the opposition by Markovski. He argued that the new language would lose its melody and the poems of the 19th century poet

¹⁴⁸ Dragni Dragnev, *Skopската ikona Blaže Koneski: Makedonski lingvist ili srâbski politrabotnik* [The Skopje Icon Blaže Koneski: A Macedonian Linguist or a Serbian Propagandist]. (Sofia: Macedonian Scientific Institute, 1998), 45.

¹⁴⁹ Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 116-7.

¹⁵⁰ -----.”Stenografski beleshki od konferentsiite na filoloshkata komisija za ustanovuenje na makedonskata azbuka i makedonskiot literaturnen jazik” [Stenographic Notes of the Linguistic Commission for the Founding of the Macedonian Literary Language] Skopje November 27th - December 3rd, 1944.

Konstantin Miladinov would not sound well in the new language, since these poems followed the Bulgarian language intonation.¹⁵¹ Markovski could not comprehend that the new Macedonian language, similar to Karelian and Moldovan, was based more on political calculations than on linguistic considerations. Despite these attempts at creating a different language and the total ban on Bulgarian books and other printed materials in Macedonia, the new Macedonian language shared every distinguishing feature with Bulgarian, which differentiated the Bulgarian language from the other Slavic languages – the postpositive definitive article, lack of cases and infinitive form, etc. Thus, the Austrian linguist Otto Kronsteiner, half-jokingly called the Macedonian language a “Bulgarian language, written with a Serbian typewriter,”¹⁵² whereas the American linguist James F. Clarke, born and raised in Vardar Macedonia as a son of American missionaries, not only confirmed that Macedonians spoke Bulgarian, but added that “For Macedonians to deny their Bulgarian heritage is like Peter denying Christ, but Peter repented!”¹⁵³ Horace Lunt and Victor Friedman also admitted that the argument over the Macedonian language is more political than linguistic. Victor Friedman noted that in Scandinavia, Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish are very close to one another and mutually intelligible, with a lexical proximity up to 85%. Instead of looking for differences, however, the Scandinavian countries are proud that they do not need interpreters when they negotiate treaties.¹⁵⁴ The rationale behind the codification of the Macedonian language is quite clear – it is more political than linguistic, because Tito

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² Dimitrov, *Desette Lazhi* [The Ten Lies], 77.

¹⁵³ Clarke, *The Pen and the Sword*, 166.

¹⁵⁴ Horace G. Lunt, “Time and the Macedonian Language” In Christina Kramer and Brian Cook, eds. *Guard the Work Well Bound: Proceedings of the Third North American-Macedonian Conference on Macedonian Studies* (Indiana Slavic Studies, Volume 10, 1999), 12; Victor Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity,” In Roudometof, *The Macedonian Question*, p. 7; Friedman, “Macedonian historiography, Language, and Identity in the Context of the Yugoslav Wars of Succession” In Kramer and Cook, eds. *Guard the Work Well Bound*, 73.

and his Macedonian protégés realized that, in the Balkans, without a separate language, similar to Moldova, the other countries would not consider the Macedonians as a separate nation, so they needed a linguistic marker. Despite the fifty-year isolation of Bulgarian and Macedonian languages, the introduction of Serbian terms and its alphabet and the total ban on Bulgarian literature in Macedonia, the Macedonian language continues to be another state standard form of Bulgarian with its Serbian alphabet and phonetic spelling as opposed to the Bulgarian morphological spelling and yet a vocabulary that is about 90% identical with the Bulgarian vocabulary as Figure 2 demonstrates. Similar to Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin and Romanian/Moldovan, Macedonian is accepted as a separate language due to political correctness in academic circles, rather than being based on linguistics.

Figure 2: Bulgarian and Macedonian Vocabularies Compared, (Source: Mladenov, Marin, ed. *Bugarsko-Makedonski rečnik* [Bulgarian-Macedonian Dictionary] Skopje: Prosvetno Delo,

1968, 24-5; 164-5; 648-9)- Pages and words picked randomly

| Bulgarian | | Macedonian | | English |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| writen | pronun. | writen | pronun. | |
| безкрајно | beskrajno | бескрајно | beskrajno | endlessly |
| безкръвен | beskrâven | бескрвен | beskrâven | bloodless |
| безлик | bezlik | безобличен | bezoblichen | faceless |
| безлюден | bezlyuden | ненаселен, пуст* | nenasalen, pust | unpopulated |
| безмерен | bezmeren | Безмерен, бескраен** | Bezmeren, beskraen | Endless |
| безмилостен | bezmilosten | безмилосен | bezmilosen | merciless |
| безпокойствие, безпокойство | Bespokoystvie, | беспокојство, беспокојност | Bespokoystvo, bespokoynost | Concern, worry |
| безпокоя | bespokoya | беспокои*** | bespokoi | To bother, to worry |
| защита | zashtita | заштита | zashtita | Defence, protection |
| защо | zashto | зошто | zoshto | why |
| защото | zashtoto | зашто | zashto | because |

| | | | | |
|---------|---------|---------------|-----------------|---------|
| звезда | zvezda | свезда | dzvezda | star |
| зверски | zverski | сверски | dzverski | beastly |
| звънец | zvanec | своно,свонец | Dzvono, dzvonec | bell |
| чайник | chaynik | чајник | chaynik | teapot |
| чакал | chakal | чакал | chakal | jackal |
| чакъл | chakâl | чакал | chakal | gravel |
| чар | char | чар, шарм**** | Char, sharm | charm |

*Synonyms of the same word that exist with exactly the same spelling in standard Bulgarian

**Synonyms with a slight spelling difference in Bulgarian, but with the same pronunciation

***Both languages do not possess infinitives and Bulgarian uses 1st person, sg, present tense to be the infinitive in dictionaries, whereas in Macedonian, the infinitive is considered to be 3rd person, sg, present tense. The 3rd person form is the same in Bulgarian.

****A linguistic trick, used in Macedonia is to add as synonyms or completely replace Bulgarian words with English, Latin or other foreign terms, e.g. *iritiram-* to irritate, instead of the Bulgarian *draznya, tortura* as a synonym of the Bulgarian word *machenie-torture*, etc.

Another important decision of the Yugoslav authorities was the change of the Bulgarian last name endings –ov, –ev in Macedonia with –ski. In fact, fewer than 10% of last names in Bulgaria still have –ski endings, but –ov, –ev are predominant. Lazar Koliševski, born with his Bulgarian name Lazar Kolišev, Blaže Koneski, born as Blagoy Konev and studying in Serbia as Blagoje Konjević, Mihajlo Apostolski, born as Mihail Apostolov and other pro-Tito communists voluntarily changed their names to demonstrate their fidelity to Tito and their contempt for their Bulgarian heritage. These family name endings, however, were imposed on most other inhabitants of Macedonia. The Yugoslav police and administration used different pretexts to change the names of the population – a requirement to enter a school, to get a job or sometimes even without asking for their formal consent, people received their newly issued diplomas and passports with last names – Gruevski, Georgievski or Ivanovski, instead of Gruev, Georgiev or Ivanov, as their original names were spelled.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ Dragnev, *Skopskata ikona Blaže Koneski* [The Skopje Icon Blaže Koneski], 80-5.

After the annihilation of the pro-Bulgarian right-wing elements after 1945, the Yugoslav authorities concentrated their attention on communists with a Bulgarian past and pro-Bulgarian comments. One such was Venko Markovski, who dared to oppose Koneski's ideas on the Serbianization of the Macedonian language. Others were Panko Brashnarov and Pavel Shatev, who wrote letters to Georgi Dimitrov and Stalin to complain about Tito and to ask for help in maintaining the Bulgarian character of Macedonia. Another was Metodija Andonov- Ćento, who became the first president of the Yugoslav People's Republic of Macedonia and demanded a united and independent Macedonia outside Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav communists created special gulags in Idrizovo, near Skopje and Goli Otok, a barren island in Croatia, where they sent such pro-Bulgarian or pro-Macedonian independence agitators. Metodija Andonov- Ćento was sentenced to twelve years in prison in 1946, Shatev and Brashnarov died in prison, whereas Venko Markovski managed to be released from Goli Otok and to move to Bulgaria in 1965, thanks to the pressure on the Yugoslav government by the Bulgarian communist dictator Todor Zhivkov.¹⁵⁶ Once in Bulgaria, Markovski in 1981 wrote the book *Blood Is Thicker than Water*, in which he apologized for his participation in Tito's Macedonian policy and declared his Bulgarian national identity. In 1984, Columbia University Press published his book *Goli Otok-The Island of Death*, which described Markovski's experience in the Yugoslav Gulag.¹⁵⁷

In 1967, thanks to the blessing of Tito, the Macedonian Orthodox Church was created as an autonomous body, even though it is still unrecognized by any other Orthodox Church. By the 1960s, the University of Skopje and the Institute of National History were producing

¹⁵⁶ Vladimir Karaboychev, "Konclageri na 20 vek: Goli Otok" [Concentration Camps of the 20th Century: Goli Otok], *Macedonia*, 31 (1994), 35-47.

¹⁵⁷ Venko Markovski, *Kr vta Voda Ne Stava* [Blood Is Thicker Than Water] (Veliko T rnovo: Sts. Cyril and Methody U. Press, 2003), 12-17.

large volumes of Macedonian history. The first generation passed its schooling in the new language and the new Macedonian and Yugoslav identities seemed to be firmly instilled in this new generation. And, yet during the whole Cold War and after, the Yugoslav authorities felt insecure and suspicious of pro-Bulgarian attitudes that might threaten the new Macedonian national identity and thus, they sporadically prosecuted Macedono-Bulgarians. In 1977, Petar Zaharov was charged with claiming that Macedonians were Bulgarians and another two inhabitants of Skopje – Lazar Kraynichanec and Angel Geroyiski – were jailed for five years for the same offence under Article 118 of the Criminal Code of Yugoslavia, which was concerned with hostile propaganda. In 1984, Ivan Zografski was sentenced to 6 1/2 years in prison and confiscation of his property and permanent expulsion from Yugoslavia for his pro-Bulgarian comments. He denied the existence of the Macedonian nation and criticized Tito. In total more than 100, 000 Macedono-Bulgarians were intimidated, interned and jailed during the Cold War for expressing their Bulgarian identity.¹⁵⁸

After the creation of the Macedonian language and the brutal repressions of the 1940s, a cohort of Macedonian historians, financed by the Yugoslav government, started to distort and falsify historical facts. During the Cold War, Macedonian historiography did not concentrate on the history of ancient Macedonia. The seven-volume edition of *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* [History of the Macedonian People] dedicated only 22 pages to that period in the first volume.¹⁵⁹ This approach to the ancient Hellenic Macedonian state would

¹⁵⁸ Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 118-9; Dimitâr Gocev, “Vazstanovyavaneto I deynostta na VMRO vav Vardarska Makedoniya sled 1944” [Reestablishment and Activities of IMRO in Vardar Macedonia after 1944] In Dimitâr Mirchev and Dimitâr Gocev, eds. *100 Godini VMORO* [100 Years IMARO] (Sofia: MNI, 1994), 181-202.

¹⁵⁹ Mihailo Apostolski et al., eds. *Istorija na makedonskiot narod, vol. 1: Od predistoriskoto vreme do krajot na XVIII vek* [History of the Macedonian People, vol. 1: From the Prehistorical Period until the End of the 18th c.] (Skopje: INI, 1969), pp. 33-55.

change by the 1980s, and particularly in the 1990s, but during the Cold War, the main target of Macedonian historians was the Bulgarian heritage. The task of Macedonian historians was to prove that every Bulgarian historical figure that ever lived within the boundaries of the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had a Macedonian ethnonational identity. The Croatian historian Stjepan Antoljak, who moved to Skopje in 1956 to help his Macedonian colleagues in their desperation to cement the Macedonian national identity, gave the Macedonians the idea to claim the Bulgarian Tsar Samuil (997-1014) as a Macedonian ruler. Antoljak claimed that Samuil founded the first Slavic Macedonian kingdom, only on the basis that his capitals Prespa and Ohrid were situated within the modern borders of FYR Macedonia.¹⁶⁰ Blaže Ristovski supported Antoljak and stressed that already in the 9th century there was no “ethnogenetic, cultural, linguistic, and civilizational unity” between Macedonians and Bulgarians.¹⁶¹ The issue of all medieval chronicles, however, was that they all referred to the Bulgarian tsar Samuil and his Bulgarian uprising. Thus, when the University of Cyril and Methody in Skopje published in 1985 its collection of *Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People for Independence and a Nation-State*, they included excerpts of the medieval chronicles of the Byzantine historians Ioannis Zonaras and Ioannis Skylitzes with a footnote for every use of the term Bulgaria and Bulgarian in these documents. The attached footnotes, however, were futile and they did not help the Macedonian interpretations of history. A wonderful example is the following sentence from the chronicle of Ioannis Zonaras, regarding the sons of the Bulgarian nobleman Peter: “His sons were permitted to return and to take over their father’s rule, since the four sons of one of the comitadjis in Bulgaria – David, Moses, Aaron and Samuil – had become outlaws and stirred up the

¹⁶⁰ Stjepan Antoljak. *Samuilovata država* [Samuil’s State] (Skopje: INI, 1969).

¹⁶¹ Blaže Ristovski, *Istorija na makedonskata nacija* [History of the Macedonian Nation] (Skopje: MANU, 1999), 13-14.

Bulgarians.”¹⁶² This short sentence is immediately followed by the following five-line footnote:

In the chronicle of Skylitzes we have “One of those comitadjis... in Bulgaria,” while Zonaras emphasizes: “One... in the Bulgarian land (with reference to the term “Bulgarians” see S. Antoljak, op.cit., p.120, note*). Zonaras, in contrast to Skylitzes, says that they became outlaws and stirred up the “Bulgarians”; Skylitzes says that they disturbed or agitated the “Bulgarians.”¹⁶³

Ignoring the fact that in the original versions of the chronicles, the term *Bulgarians* is not in quotation marks, the provided explanations did not clarify anything. The suggestion in the footnote that the readers, who want to learn about the use of the term *Bulgarians*, should refer to the opinion of Stjepan Antoljak, a secondary Marxist source instead of interpreting the primary Byzantine sources, is absurd. Hence, it is not surprising that the large majority of historians and encyclopaedias around the world continue to refer to Samuil as a Bulgarian ruler, recognized by Pope Gregory V as a Bulgarian king.¹⁶⁴

Numerous prominent Bulgarian writers, poets, revolutionaries and uprisings of the 19th and 20th centuries were not easy to be turned into Macedonians. A great number of eyewitnesses from the Balkans, Western Europe, Russia and the USA, including diplomats, researchers, missionaries, historians, the League of Nations and international commissions mentioned the Slavic population of Macedonia as Bulgarian and the historical figures themselves identified as staunch Bulgarians. The Macedonian historians, however, managed to solve this problem. Blaže Ristovski stressed that already in the 9th century there was no “ethnogenetic, cultural, linguistic, and civilizational unity” between Macedonians and

¹⁶² -----*Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People*, 95.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁶⁴ Pribichevich, *Macedonia: Its People and History*, 87.

Bulgarians. He also insisted that Bulgarians were a mixture of Tartars and Slavs.¹⁶⁵ Ristovski went even further to claim that “Bulgarian” in the 19th c. was not related to ethnicity but it was rather used as a synonym for “Slav” and “Christian.” Thus, the Macedonians, called Bulgarians in all these documents were not really Bulgarians, but merely members of the Bulgarian Orthodox church.¹⁶⁶ This almost compelling misinterpretation of historical events ignored the fact that the Macedonian population voted in a referendum to join the Bulgarian Church in the 19th century and even when they were ready to join a Catholic or a Protestant church, they demanded church service in Bulgarian.¹⁶⁷ Following the Macedonian approach to history, the Canadian and U.S. historians could claim that in pre-revolutionary America and pre-Confederation Canada, the term ‘English’ did not mean a nationality, but it rather referred to the membership of the people in the Anglican church.

Prominent Bulgarian nationalists, such as Dimitar Miladinov and Goce Delchev could not be turned into Macedonians with mere distortions and misinterpretations of their legacies. They openly declared their Bulgarian ethnicity and taught the Bulgarian language in Bulgarian schools in Macedonia. Thus, the historians in Skopje engaged in outright historical falsifications. The original book of the Miladinov brothers, published in 1861 as *Bolgarski Narodni Pesni* [Bulgarian Folk Songs] was published in 1983 in Skopje under the title *The Collection of the Miladinov Brothers*.¹⁶⁸ The references to Macedonia in the original forward as “Western Bulgaria” by Dimitar Miladinov were removed, and other references to “Bulgaria” and “Bulgarian language” were replaced with “Macedonia” and “Macedonian language.” In fact, the re-publishing of the Miladinov Brothers’ book with their original title

¹⁶⁵ Ristovski, *Istorija na makedonskata nacija* [History of the Macedonian Nation], 13-14.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 18-20.

¹⁶⁷ Raykov. *Istoricheskata sâdba na Makedonskite bâlgari* [The Historical Fate of Macedonian Bulgarians], 190-6.

¹⁶⁸ Todor Dimitrovski, *Podvigot na Miladinovci* [The Heroic Deed of the Miladinov Brothers] (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 2000), 5.

and no editing to the original text in 2000¹⁶⁹ was followed by the vehement protests of Macedonian historians. The original text of the *Bulgarian Folk Songs* was not available to the Yugoslav general public during the Cold War and the Macedonian historiography continued to mention the book with subtle references and descriptions such as ‘the collection of folk songs’ or ‘the Miladinovs’ collection.’¹⁷⁰ That is why, even in Toronto, when there is a public dispute, one of the first questions that the local Bulgarian Canadian nationalists ask the ethnic Macedonian diaspora is: “What was the original name of the Miladinov Brothers’ Folk Songs collection?”¹⁷¹ As late as 2000, the Macedonian historian Todor Dimitrovski maintained that: “The Bulgarian songs in the Collection were incorporated at the last minute and the matching number of Macedonian songs was removed from it.”¹⁷² This is how Dimitrovski explained the presence of folk songs from eastern Bulgaria, but he did not dare to mention even once the original title of the book, or to explain why the authors referred to all songs as Bulgarian and preferred to call Macedonia Western Bulgaria. Regardless of the extreme Bulgarian nationalism of the Miladinov Brothers, they are among the favourite “Macedonians” of the ethnic Macedonian diaspora of Toronto. The literary club at St. Clement of Ohrid Macedonian Orthodox Church in Toronto is called the Literary Society “Miladinov Brothers.”

Similarly, the folk song collection of the Bosnian Serb Stefan I. Verković, *Narodne Pesme Makedonski Bugara. Kniga I: Ženske Pesme* [Folk Songs of the Macedonian Bulgarians. Vol. 1: Women’s Songs], published in Belgrade (1860) was re-published in 1961 in Skopje under the title *Makedonski Narodni Pesni* [Macedonian Folk Songs]. The book

¹⁶⁹ Dimitâr and Konstantin Miladinovi, *Bolgarski Narodni Pesni* [Bulgarian Folk Songs]. Skopje: Jugoreklam, 2000.

¹⁷⁰ Dimitrovski, *Podvigot na Miladinovci* [The Heroic Deed of the Miladinov Brothers], 5; -----*Documents on the Struggle of the Macedonian People*, 217.

¹⁷¹ George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007.

¹⁷² Dimitrovski, *Podvigot na Miladinovci* [The Heroic Deed of the Miladinov Brothers], 9.

was edited to remove references to any ‘Macedonian Bulgarians’ and the original forward of the book, explaining the Bulgarian ethnicity of the Macedonian Slavs, was replaced with a new forward, written by Kiril Penušliski.¹⁷³

The linguist Ljudmil Spasov wrote a dissertation in 1988 and a monograph in 2005, based on his Ph.D. thesis on the “*Macedonian*”-*Russian Dictionary* of Konstantin Petkovich, published in 1848 in St. Petersburg. The original manuscript of the dictionary is kept in the Russian archives in St. Petersburg.¹⁷⁴ The original title of the dictionary is *Slovar’ Bolgaro-Ruskiy, Sostavlyamyi Bolgarinom Konstantinom M. Petkovichem* [Bulgarian-Russian Dictionary, Compiled by the Bulgarian Konstantin Petkovich]¹⁷⁵ Even a scholar with no background in Russian or any other Slavic language could reasonably conclude that *Slovar’ Bolgaro-Ruskiy* could not be translated correctly as a “Macedonian-Russian Dictionary.” Tito’s protégé, Blaže Koneski, however, approved the project of Ljudmil Spasov and even pointed out the “prominent place of Konstantin Petkovich in the creation of the Macedonian literary language.”¹⁷⁶ Koneski did not clarify the discrepancy between the codification of the Macedonian language in 1944-45 and the dictionary of Petkovich, published in 1848, or the “small” issue with its title and the ethnic identity of Petkovich.

Goce Delchev (1872-1903), who is regarded as one of the greatest Macedonians, as the leader of the Ilinden Uprising, used only literary Bulgarian and worked as a teacher in Bulgarian language and history. Lazar Koliševski claimed that Goce Delchev was educated in Bulgaria and that was why he used Bulgarian in his correspondence. However, almost as

¹⁷³ Kiril Penušliski, ed. *Makedonski Narodni Pesni, sobrani od Stefan Verkovic. Redakcija I predgovor Kiril Penušliski* [Macedonian Folk Songs, Collected by Stefan I. Verković, Editor and Forward Kiril Penušliski] (Skopje: Kočo Racin, 1961).

¹⁷⁴ Ljudmil Spasov. *Izbrani Poglavlja od Istorijata na Makedonskiot Pismen Jazik* [Selected Titles of the History of the Macedonian Literary Language] (Skopje: Kultura, 2005).

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 110.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 260.

an eye-witness, Koliševski assured his readers that Delchev used only Macedonian in his oral communication.¹⁷⁷ In order to instil the belief in the young generations that Goce was a proud Macedonian, who used only the Macedonian language, all written records of Goce Delchev, originally written in standard Bulgarian, were reproduced in numerous books with the proper Macedonian orthography of 1945 and presented as original documents.¹⁷⁸ In their insecurity, the Macedonian historians are still very sensitive about the issue of Delchev's national identity. The Macedonian historian Orde Ivanovski said to the American researcher Robert Kaplan in 1991: "The Bulgarians are well-known falsifiers of documents [...] What can you expect of Tartars? [...] How could Gotse Delchev be Bulgarian? He was born in Macedonia. He spoke Macedonian, not Bulgarian. How could he be a Bulgarian?"¹⁷⁹ The words of Ivanovski might not seem very persuasive for the educated historians in Greece, Bulgaria or Germany, but by the 1990s, Yugoslav Macedonian historians such as Orde Ivanovski, Hristo Andonov-Poljanski and Lazar Koliševski, supported by the Yugoslav legislature, Gulags and repressions managed to raise and educate at least two generations of proud Macedonians in Cold War Yugoslavia.

One of the reasons for the failure of the Serbian policy towards Macedonia in interwar Yugoslavia was that the Bulgarian state actively opposed it and supported all IMRO and other pro-Bulgarian elements, which could destabilize Yugoslavia and preserve the Bulgarian ethnicity of the Macedonian population. The situation after the Second World War, however, was radically different. Again, Bulgaria lost the war, but this time its sovereignty was restricted, not only as a former ally of Nazi Germany, but also by the new

¹⁷⁷ Lazar Koliševski, *Aspects of the Macedonian Question* (Belgrade: Socialist Thought and Practice, 1980), 132.

¹⁷⁸ Hristo Andonov-Poljanski, *Goce Delčev, vol. 1-6*. (Skopje: Kultura, 1972)); Hristo Andonov-Poljanski, *Goce Delčev*. (Pula, Croatia: Istarska Naklada, 1985); Vančo Nikoleski, *Goce Delčev* (Skopje: Makedonska kniga, 1978).

¹⁷⁹ Robert D. Kaplan, "History's Cauldron" *Atlantic Monthly* 267 (June 1999), 99.

Fatherland Front government, which was proclaimed on 9th September 1944 under the direct control of Stalin and his Bulgarian communist protégé Georgi Dimitrov. Tito used this situation to press Bulgaria for the secession of its southwestern are of Pirin Macedonia to Yugoslavia. As early as mid-September 1944, Tito sent Tempo and Koliševski to Sofia to meet with the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party on the Macedonian Question. They blamed the Bulgarian communists for their wartime actions in Macedonia and demanded a union of Pirin Macedonia with the new Yugoslav People's Republic of Macedonia.¹⁸⁰ The Bulgarian communist leader Georgi Dimitrov did not oppose this idea, because he was a staunch Bolshevik and Stalinist, who considered the only true identity of the people to be their class identity. Besides, in the 1920s and 1930s, his party favoured the creation of Dobrudjan, Thracian and Macedonian nations and states in a large Soviet Balkan federation.¹⁸¹ Dimitrov also had very good personal relations with Tito and Tito considered Dimitrov as his friend until the death of Dimitrov in 1948. As every Soviet puppet government in Eastern Europe, however, the Bulgarian government was passive in the period 1944-1945 and waited for instructions from Moscow. In June of 1946, Stalin ordered the Bulgarian Delegation in Moscow, which included Georgi Dimitrov, Traycho Kostov and Vassil Kolarov to support Tito's Macedonian policy and, furthermore, to work for the creation of a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, regardless of its present absence. Stalin ordered the following development in Pirin Macedonia:

Cultural autonomy must be granted to Pirin Macedonia within the framework of Bulgaria. Tito has shown himself more flexible than you - possibly because he lives in a multiethnic state and has had to give equal rights to the various peoples. Autonomy will be the first step towards the unification of Macedonia, but in view of the present situation there should be no hurry on this matter. [...]That a Macedonian consciousness has not yet developed among the

¹⁸⁰ Barker, *Macedonia*, 99.

¹⁸¹ John Georgeoff, "Ethnic Minorities in the People's Republic of Macedonia," In George Klein and Milan J. Reban, eds. *The Politics of Ethnicity in Eastern Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 68.

population is of no account. No such consciousness existed in Belarus either when we proclaimed it a Soviet Republic. However, later it was shown that Belarusian people did in fact exist.¹⁸²

It was evident that Stalin wanted to plan the emergence of a new Macedonian minority in Bulgaria, similar to his state-planned nationalisms and minorities in Moldova, Karelia, Belarus and elsewhere. Since, Stalin's word was *vox Dei* for the Bulgarian communist leadership, Dimitrov and his aides immediately complied with Stalin's orders. At the 10th Plenum of the Bulgarian Communist Party of 9-10 August 1946, the delegates decided to declare the existence of an ethnic Macedonian minority in Bulgaria and to organize a national census by the end of 1946, which had to prove that the majority of the population in Pirin Macedonia was ethnically Macedonian. With a press release, the Fatherland Front declared to the population in Pirin Macedonia that the government "recognizes for first time, along with the other nationalities in Bulgaria the Macedonians. The Macedonians in the Pirin region have all the rights and freedoms to express freely their will during the national census."¹⁸³ The local population was very hostile to the new policy, since they had a Bulgarian ethnic consciousness. The most resistant group was made up of the former IMRO activists. The Bulgarian communist authorities accused all opponents of their policy as 'fascists' and 'greater Bulgarian chauvinists.' Hundreds of prominent Bulgarian nationalists were quickly interned into the new Gulags and thousands of others, who refused to declare themselves Macedonians, were forcefully resettled in other regions of Bulgaria.

¹⁸² Dobrin Michev, *Makedonskiyat Vâpros i Bâlgaro-Yugoslavskite Otnosheniya 9 Septemvri 1944-1949* [The Macedonian Question and the Bulgaro-Yugoslav Relations, 9th September 1944-1949] (Sofia: St. Clement of Ohrid U. Press, 1994), 507.

¹⁸³ Pero Korobar and Orde Ivanovski. *The Historical Truth, the Progressive Social Circles in Bulgaria and Pirin Macedonia on the Macedonian National Question 1896-1956*. (Skopje: Kultura, 1981), 377-8.

The most resistant to this propaganda were the Bulgarian refugees and their descendants from Macedonia.¹⁸⁴ The Bulgarian Canadian refugee from Pirin Macedonia, George Mladenov, shared with the author his experience in the period 1946-1949. His father, as a refugee from Aegean Macedonia in the Pirin town of Nevrokop (now Goce Delchev) vehemently opposed the recommendation to declare Macedonian ethnicity and as a result he was interned with his family in the village of Ribarica, away from the Pirin Region.¹⁸⁵

Using force, threats and intimidation, the 1946 Bulgarian national census managed to find 252,908 ethnic Macedonians in Bulgaria.¹⁸⁶ As in Yugoslavia, the Bulgarian communists rarely took into account the real ethnic consciousness of the people. George Mladenov still has his Bulgarian Secondary Education Diploma, on which he was listed as an ethnic Macedonian. As a vehement Bulgarian nationalist, he was infuriated, because nobody asked his consent. More than fifty years later in Toronto, he angrily said: “The Communists, these Serbian servants, wanted to make me a Macedonian! I have tens of descendants, who were involved in the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization to live and die for Bulgaria!”¹⁸⁷

Despite the adverse response of the majority of the Bulgarian population in Pirin Macedonia, in 1947-1948, the situation became even worse. The Yugoslav government sent groups of so called ‘cultural workers’ across Pirin Macedonia to open Macedonian theatres and to teach the new Macedonian language and history to the local children. Many people protested and chanted in public “We are Bulgarians, not Macedonians.”¹⁸⁸ The protests were

¹⁸⁴ Michev, *Makedonskiyat Vâpros* [The Macedonian Question], 400-70.

¹⁸⁵ George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007.

¹⁸⁶ Milena Mahon, “The Macedonian Question in Bulgaria,” *Nations and Nationalism*, 4 (3), 398.

¹⁸⁷ George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007.

¹⁸⁸ Papavizas, *Claiming Macedonia*, 199; Evangelos Kofos, “National Heritage and National Identity in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Macedonia,” In Martin Blinkhorn and Thanos Veremis, eds. *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality* (London-Athens: SAGE-ELIAMEP, 1990), 126.

in vain. Paul Shoup described the absurdity of the Macedonian project in Bulgaria by pointing out that: “Everybody was compelled, regardless of their wishes to study Macedonian and to read Macedonian newspapers. The teachers also sent telegrams to Skopje in the name of a Pirin town or village in which the locality would announce its enthusiastic approval for the unification of the district with the Macedonian People’s Republic.”¹⁸⁹

Meanwhile, in August of 1947 Tito and Dimitrov met in Bled, Slovenia and signed the Bled Agreement. It laid the basis, not only for the official recognition by Bulgaria of the Macedonian nation, but also secured the cooperation of Bulgaria for the unification of Pirin and Aegean Macedonia with the Yugoslav Macedonian Republic, as well as the possible joining of the rest of Bulgaria in the Yugoslav federation. Dimitrov even allowed the relocation of the remains of the Macedono-Bulgarian revolutionary Goce Delchev from Sofia to Skopje in 1948 to help the new Yugoslav Republic with the building of its heroic pantheon.¹⁹⁰

After the split between Tito and Stalin in 1948, due to the unwillingness of Tito to strictly follow Stalin’s orders, the Yugoslav Communist Party was expelled from the Comintern and Stalin ordered the Bulgarians to abandon the Macedonization of Pirin Macedonia. As a result, all Yugoslav Macedonian teachers were immediately expelled from Bulgaria and the 5th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1948 once again proclaimed Pirin Macedonia as Bulgarian territory.

In 1956, however, when Nikita Khrushchev wanted to improve his relations with Yugoslavia, the Bulgarian communists had to follow once again Soviet directions. The 1956 National Census in Bulgaria recorded the existence of 187, 789 Macedonians. The straining

¹⁸⁹ Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav*, 155.

¹⁹⁰ Papavizas, *Claiming Macedonia*, 198.

of Soviet-Yugoslav relations in the 1960s led to a new declaration of the Bulgarian Communist Party Plenum of 1963, in which the whole population of Bulgaria was declared as Bulgarian only and the existence of a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria was denounced. The category 'Macedonian,' however existed on the Bulgarian census of 1965 and 8,750 Bulgarian citizens declared Macedonian as their ethnicity. After 1965 until the end of the Cold War, the ethnic category 'Macedonian' was removed from census questionnaires and the people who insisted on claiming an ethnic Macedonian identity were quickly fined or even jailed as Yugoslav spies by the Bulgarian communist authorities.¹⁹¹

It is a real miracle that after all these radical shifts of the ethnic identity of the Pirin population by its own government, the local population did not develop a multiple personality disorder but preserved its Bulgarian ethnic consciousness and continues to openly declare it. Until the end of the Cold War, the Bulgarian and Yugoslav authorities and historians blamed each other for the violation of the human rights of the Bulgarian minority in Yugoslavia and the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria. The Macedonian historians liked to quote the results of the 1948 and 1956 Bulgarian Censuses as a proof of the 200,000 ethnic Macedonians who lived in Bulgaria. They never wrote, however, about the brutality and the intimidation that led to these astonishing results.¹⁹²

Tito had also ambitions to include Aegean Macedonia in his Yugoslav state and thus, he decided to support the Greek communists in the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). He hoped that, if the Greek Communist Party (KKE) forces won, Tito would detach Aegean Macedonia from Greece. Tito wanted to incorporate the whole geographic region of Macedonia in his Yugoslav state, regardless of its historic past or ethnic composition. The

¹⁹¹ Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav*, 155-70; Mahon, "The Macedonian Question in Bulgaria," 398.

¹⁹² Vangja Čašule, *Od Priznavanje do negiranje* [From Recognition to Negation] (Skopje: Kultura, 1976); Barker, *Macedonia*, 106-10; Mahon, "The Macedonian Question in Bulgaria," 398-9.

split between Tito and Stalin in 1948, as well as the western opposition, particularly the British and American aid to the anticommunist forces in the Greek Civil War, prevented Tito from detaching Aegean Macedonia from Greece.¹⁹³

The communist guerrillas of the National Liberation Front (EAM) and their military wing ELAS were the most active force in fighting the Axis military forces in Greece. Tito's assistant, Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo came to Greece in 1943 determined to both diminish Bulgarian influence among the local Slavic population and to conduct Tito's plan for infiltrating Aegean Macedonia with pro-Yugoslav elements. Tito sent Yugoslav instructors, who helped to organize the pro-Yugoslav Slav-Macedonian National Liberation Front (SNOF) in northern Greece. The non-communist Greek resistance, organized by YVE (Protectors of Northern Greece) categorically opposed any concessions to Tito and the large majority of Greeks considered any negotiations for the joining of Aegean Macedonia to Yugoslavia as treason. Thus, the Greek communists could not maintain a firm policy in Macedonia, because they needed both Yugoslav military support as well as the support of the local Greek population. Meanwhile, in 1944, due to the Yugoslav infiltration of Aegean Macedonia and the weakening of the Bulgarian influence after the withdrawal of the Bulgarian army, along the traditional Greek and Bulgarian ethnic identities, a new Slav Macedonian consciousness started to emerge. Thus, even when SNOF was banned by KKE party orders in the spring of 1944 and most of its members moved to Yugoslavia, ELAS allowed the formation of Slav Macedonian units within it under the command of Naum Peyov.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Shoup, *Communism and the Yugoslav*, 127-45.

¹⁹⁴ Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 110-11.

The Greek communists, however, were clearly losing the war, despite Yugoslav and Bulgarian communist support. Thanks to President Harry Truman, after March 1947, the anti-communist Greek national army received \$ 400 million of US aid and military assistance.¹⁹⁵ Similar to the Bulgarian and Yugoslav communists, the Greek KKE constantly changed its policy on the Macedonian Question between 1924 and 1949. On 31st January 1949, a few months before the communist defeat in the Greek Civil War (1946-1949), the Fifth Plenum of the KKE announced that Greek Macedonia should join a united Macedonia that would include Greek, Bulgarian and Yugoslav Macedonian areas as part of a new Balkan communist federation under Bulgarian hegemony. This decision was similar to the 1924 and 1931 announcements for Macedonia in a Balkan communist federation under the Soviet model and the 1946 pledge to Tito that Aegean Macedonia would join Yugoslavia. Six years after the Greek Civil War, in an attempt to regain some popular support, the 6th Plenum of the KKE renounced the decision of the previous plenum and proclaimed the desire of the Greek communists for the equality of all minorities within the borders of Greece, but the reputation of the Communist Party was completely ruined by then.¹⁹⁶

The Greek Civil War led many Slavs and Greeks from Aegean Macedonia and elsewhere to leave Greece as refugees and as many as 80,000 were victims of the war. At least 80,000 refugees were relocated in the communist world, including the Soviet central Asian republics. This number included 28,000 child-refugees (2-14 years old) or *deca-begalci* in Bulgarian/Macedonian, who were evacuated or kidnapped, depending on the perspective (Yugoslav or Greek) by the KKE “Committee for the Assistance to Children” (EVOP). In June 1949, there were about 11,000 children transferred to Yugoslavia, while

¹⁹⁵ Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 177.

¹⁹⁶ Papavizas, *Claiming Macedonia*, 203-5.

5,000 were sent to Romania, 2,500 to Poland, 3,000 to Czechoslovakia, 2,500 to Hungary, 700 to East Germany and 2,500 to Bulgaria. Many of these child-refugees later immigrated to the West and at least 2,000 of them went to Canada.¹⁹⁷

Despite the mass exodus of Slavs from Aegean Macedonia during and shortly after the Greek Civil War, the 1951 Greek national census indicated that the Slavic minority kept its presence in Greece. According to the Census figures, 35,894 Slavophones lived in Aegean Macedonia out of 2,121, 953 people and the Slavophones' total number was 47,167 in all of Greece.¹⁹⁸ This was the last census in Greece that included data for the native language of the population.

Greek-Yugoslav relations were strained during the Cold War because the Yugoslav diplomats constantly demanded from Greece recognition of the local population as a Macedonian minority. The Bulgarian government, on the other hand, urged Greece to recognize its Slavic population as a Bulgarian minority. The Greeks used instead the neutral non-nation term *Slavophones* for their minority and their language was referred to as Slavic.¹⁹⁹ The Greek rationale was that the neutral term Slavophones could prevent territorial claims from the neighbouring Slavic countries and it could help the assimilation of this population into mainstream Greek society.

As in other Balkan countries, the Greek authorities did not attempt to integrate their Slavic minority, but rather to assimilate it. During the military dictatorship in Greece (1967-

¹⁹⁷ Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 178-9; Georgi Daskalov, *Bългарite v Egejska Makedoniya. Mit ili realnost* [The Bulgarians in Aegean Macedonia. A Myth or a Reality] (Sofia: MNI, 1996), 230-300; Papavizas, *Claiming Macedonia*, 211; Risto Kirjazovski, *Makedonskata politička emigracija od Egejskiot del na Makedonija vo istoč -noevropskite zemji po Vtorata svetska vojna*. [The Macedonian Political Emigration from the Aegean Part of Macedonia in the Eastern-European Countries after the Second World War] (Skopje: Kultura, 1989), 280-90.

¹⁹⁸ Papavizas, *Claiming Macedonia*, 211.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 213-4.

1974), many Macedonian villages near the northern border of Greece became a restricted zone, where the movement of the citizens into and out of that zone was controlled by the authorities and the public speaking of Slavic dialects was strongly discouraged. In fact, in 1959, a number of villages in Aegean Macedonia had the so called language oaths, which were organized by Greek officials and demanded from the local population to swear that from then on, they would give up their Slavic dialect and they would speak only Greek. Moreover, in 1962 the Act 4234 was issued, which stipulated that persons who were stripped of their Greek citizenship were banned from returning to Greece. These policies led many Slavophones to immigrate abroad, particularly to Canada and Australia. By the 1980s, when democracy was completely restored in Greece most of the inhabitants of Aegean Macedonia were either ethnic Greeks or Slavophones, who self-identified as Greeks. Nevertheless, the Greek citizenship law of 1982 allowed political refugees of the Greek Civil War to return to Greece and restore their Greek citizenship, only if they were Greeks by origin, i.e. the Slavic immigrants were excluded, which infuriated the diasporas of Aegean refugees abroad.²⁰⁰

Anthropological surveys of Jane Cowan and Anastasia Karakasidou in the 1980s Aegean Macedonian villages indicated that many Slavophones preserved elements of their culture, including many Slavic terms. In western Aegean Macedonia, where the Yugoslav influence was stronger (around Pella, Kastoria and Florina), villagers called their language Slavic, local, or sometimes even Macedonian, whereas villagers in eastern Aegean Macedonia called their language 'Bulgarian' or local (*dopia* in Greek). Most of them self-identified as Greeks by nationality and realized that their Slavic dialects were strongly

²⁰⁰ Daskalov, *Bългарите в Егейска Македонија* [The Bulgarians in Aegean Macedonia], 305-15; -----*Denying Ethnic Identity: The Macedonians of Greece*. (New York-Washington-Los Angeles-London: Human Rights Watch, 1994), 7-8; Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 162-3.

influenced by Greek.²⁰¹ Regardless of this favourable situation for the Greek government, it still maintains the position that the only minority in Greece is the Muslim minority in western Thrace.²⁰² The few Slavophones who dared to openly proclaim an ethnic Macedonian identity in Greece faced harassment from the authorities. Even the Canadian citizen Lefter Lajovski, who was born in Greece and wanted to visit Greece in 1988 as a part of a refugee reunion was denied entry and the customs officers told him that he had to change his name to a Greek one if he wanted to enter Greece, regardless of the fact that Canadian citizens do not need visas for Greece. As a result of these policies, Poulton, as well as the author of this dissertation, observed that usually the Macedonian ethnic nationalism and anti-Greek sentiments are much stronger among immigrants from Aegean Macedonia as compared to Vardar Macedonia.²⁰³

2.7: 1991 and Beyond: FYROM Independence and the Modern Macedonian Question

On 8th September, 1991, the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia held a referendum to see if the local residents supported Macedonian independence. 96.44% of the voters, from a turnout 72.16%, voted for independence. On the basis of this overwhelming majority, on 17th September 1991, the Assembly of the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia declared independence under the name the Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, in 1992, the newly independent state accepted the Vergina Sun, a Hellenic symbol displayed on the grave of the

²⁰¹ Anastasia Karakasidou, "Women of the Family, Women of the Nation: National enculturation among Slav-Speakers in North-West Greece," In Peter Mackridge and Eleni Yannakakis, eds. *Ourselves and Others: The Development of a Greek Macedonian Cultural Identity Since 1912* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1997), 91-110; Jane K. Cowan, "Idioms of Belonging: Polyglot Articulations of Local Identity in a Greek Macedonian Town," In *Ibid.*, 133-52.

²⁰² -----*Denying Ethnic Identity*, 1.

²⁰³ Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 163-7.

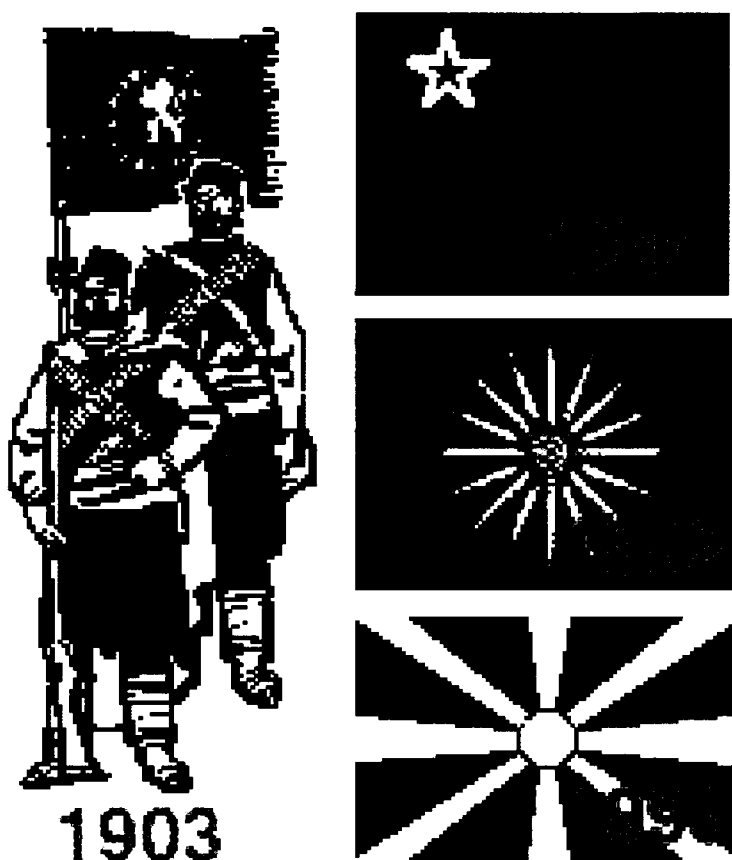
ancient Macedonian king Philip of Macedon, as their new flag, which shocked both the Greek government and the Greek nation. It was evident that the new country had a national identity crisis and it was looking for ancient and historically significant symbols to affirm its place among independent countries.²⁰⁴ Figure 3 indicates the Macedonian transformation over the last century, from the Bulgarian flag of the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising of 1903 with the Bulgarian inscription *Svoboda ili Smârt* [Freedom or Death], followed by the communist flag of 1944 and the Hellenic Vergina Sun or the Star of Vergina of 1992. Due to vehement Greek opposition to both the name of the new republic – Macedonia – and its appropriation of Greek symbols with its new flag, the country was admitted to the United Nations in 1993 under the temporary name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis supported his policy with the statement that: “the position of his government, as regards the name use is given, self-evident and shared by the entire Greek nation.”²⁰⁵

The end of the Cold War did not bring any positive change in the entrenched positions of the three Balkan countries – FYROM, Greece and Bulgaria – over the Macedonian dispute. The official policies of the three countries continued to be the suppression of all dissenters, the negation of other national identities, the ignoring of the individual right and choice of ethnic self-identification and the use of historical and linguistic evidence to justify these policies.

²⁰⁴ Aristotel Tziampiris, *Greece, European Political Cooperation and the Macedonian Question* (Burlington, VT and Sydney: Ashgate, 2000), 50-67.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

Figure 3: The flags of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (1944-2007)
 (Source: Nikola Achkov, *Makedoniya v nashata istoriya* [Macedonia in Our History] (Sofia: Vasil Stanilov Publishers, 2003, 10).



Despite the volatile relationship between the ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in the country, who represent 25% of the total population of 2 million, as opposed to 65% ethnic Macedonians, according to the 2002 FYROM National Census, the Macedonian government continues to support the concept of an ethnic Macedonian nation instead of looking for a more consensual civic national concept.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ FYROM National Census 2002 [http://www.stat.gov.mk/english/glavna_eng.asp?br=18]; Maria-Eleni Koppa, "Ethnic Albanians in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Between Nationality and Citizenship," *Nationalism & Ethnic Politics*, 7 (4) 2001, 37-65.

Under Greek pressure the Macedonian government changed the official flag of the country in 1995, removing from it the Vergina 16-ray sun. Yet, the Macedonian authorities continued to provoke both Greece and Bulgaria. Article 49 of the Macedonian constitution stated that the new republic will be concerned with the ethnic Macedonian minorities outside its borders. On the other hand, the Macedonian authorities continued the Yugoslav policy of pressure against Macedonian citizens with ethnic Bulgarian consciousness. Despite the low number of people who openly declare Bulgarian ethnic identity (3-4,000), the Macedonian Supreme Court banned in 1994 the pro-Bulgarian Human Rights Party of Ilija Ilievski and did not allow the registration of the Bulgarian cultural organization in Ohrid Radko.²⁰⁷

Encouraged by their government, Macedonian historians went to nationalistic extremes. If the 1969 edition of the *History of the Macedonian People* contained only 22 pages on ancient Macedonia, the first volume of the new 2000 edition of the seven-volume *Istorija na makedonskiot narod* [History of the Macedonian People] included over 200 pages on ancient Macedonia.²⁰⁸ Increasing numbers of young Macedonian historians, such as L. Slavaeva, Vasil Tupurkovski, and Nade Proeva also challenged the Greek interpretation of ancient history, asserting that ancient Macedonians had a non-Hellenic identity and language.²⁰⁹ Despite the lack of any historical evidence to support the Macedonian position, Petko Kuzman summed up the official Macedonian position with the statement:

“Macedonian history cannot be treated otherwise than as a historical continuity from the

²⁰⁷ Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 214.

²⁰⁸ Branko Panov, ed. *Istorija na makedonskiot narod, vol. 1: Makedonija od predistoriskoto vreme do podpagjaneto pod turska vlast (1371 godina)* [History of the Macedonian People, vol. 1: Macedonia from the Prehistorical Period until Its Fall Under Turkish Domination] (Skopje: INI, 2000), 45-258.

²⁰⁹ L. Slavaeva, *Etnogeneza na makedonskiot narod- kontinuitet I tradicija* [Ethnogenesis of the Macedonian People: Continuity and Tradition] (Skopje, 1992); Vasil Tupurkovski, *Istorija na Makedonija. Od drevnina do smrtta na Aleksandar Makedonski*. [History of Macedonia: From Antiquity until the Death of Alexander of Macedonia] (Skopje: Titan, 1993); Nade Proeva, *Studii za antičkite Makedonci* [Studies about the Ancient Macedonians] (Skopje, Ohrid: Macedonia Prima, 1997), 10-25.

creation of the name Macedonia until today.”²¹⁰ Some reasonable historians, such as Ivan Mikulčik, Krste Crvenkovski and Slavko Milosavlevski challenged the popular historical myths in Macedonia with solid historical evidence. Mikulčik proved with his archaeological research that there were no ancient Macedonians when the Slavs and the proto-Bulgarians came to settle in the modern territory of the FYROM in the 6th and 7th centuries. Crvenkovski and Milosavlevski, meanwhile, challenged the myth of the heroic partisan resistance during the Second World War against the Bulgarian army. They also shook the belief in the significant role of Lazar Koliševski in organizing the communist resistance.²¹¹ Such monographs, however, became the exception and not the rule for the new Macedonian historiography and most historians became court historians of the government with provocative publications attempting to appropriate the ancient Greek past and the medieval to mid-20th c. Bulgarian historic heritage.

A few names deserve to be mentioned, since their supposedly historical research has almost crossed the boundaries of science fiction. Aleksandar Donski not only claimed that there was a fundamental ethnic distinction between Bulgarians and Macedonians but he also claimed that the Bulgarian medieval tsar Samuil – a Macedonian tsar according to Donski – had a genealogical connection with the modern British Queen Elizabeth II.²¹² Taško D. Belčev, whose grandfather committed suicide during the dictatorship of General Ioannis Metaxas in Greece, turned his research into a personal revenge against everything that is Greek. He went so far to claim that Homer’s *Iliad and Odyssey*, as well as the whole ancient Greek mythology, were in fact part of the Macedonian culture, literature and mythology.

²¹⁰ Proeva, *Studii za antičkite Makedonci* [Studies about the Ancient Macedonians] (Skopje, Ohrid: Macedonia Prima) 5.

²¹¹ Mikulčik, *Srednovkovni Gradovi* [Medieval Towns]; Crvenkovski and Milosavlevski. *Našiot Pogled za Vremeto* [Our View of Koliševski’s Times].

²¹² Aleksandar Donski, *The Genealogical Lineage Between Queen Elizabeth II and the Medieval Macedonian Czar Samuel*. (Shtip-Sydney: Macedonian Literary Association “Grigor Prlichev,” 2005).

Regardless of the fact that the Macedonian language was codified in 1944 and it was not acquired fluently by the local population before the 1960s, Belčev claimed that Macedonia had 4,000 years of history and civilization. Furthermore: “the Bulgarians, as well as the Hellenes have always been centuries behind the Macedonians in their history and writing and literacy.”²¹³ His monograph, however, has fewer than ten footnotes, because his theories cannot be supported by any primary or respectable secondary source.

In November of 2007, the Macedonian historian Miloš Lindro went even further with his announcement in the Macedonian media that after 20-years of research, he concluded that undoubtedly the Bible was initially written in the Macedonian language.²¹⁴ He claimed that everything described in the Bible happened in fact not in Israel but in Macedonia. Lindro maintained that he decoded the Bible and every place in it has to be replaced with a Macedonian name place to understand the text. E.g. Jerusalem should be replaced with Ohrid in order to realize that the Holy city in which Christ was crucified, was in fact Ohrid and that Christ’s cross was later thrown into Lake Ohrid. In order to conclude that the whole Judeo-Christian world has a Macedonian origin, Lindro used ancient legends, which are known only to him, as well as the folk songs book of the Miladinov Brothers, which supposedly have a secret meaning. Lindro continued the old Macedonian dogma not to mention the original title of Miladinov’s book.²¹⁵

Such preposterous claims should not even be discussed by historians, but unfortunately they are widely popular, not only among the Macedonian media and nationalists, but also among the majority of the FYROM historians. This desire of both the

²¹³ Taško D. Belčev, *Makedonija: 4,000 Godini Istorija, Civilizacija i Pismenost* [Macedonia: 4,000 Years History, Civilization, and Written Records] (Skopje: Strk, 1996), 5; 157.

²¹⁴ -----, “Hristos Otnovo Razpnat v... Ohrid” [Christ Crucified Again... In Ohrid], *Novinar*, no. 274, 26th November 2007, 10.

²¹⁵ -----, “Hristos Otnovo Razpnat v... Ohrid”, 10.

FYROM government and Macedonian historians to prove that every significant historical event and figure in the Balkans and elsewhere have a link with the Macedonian nation prompted the Bulgarian nationalist historian Bozhidar Dimitrov to comment sarcastically that: “the best definition of a Macedonian is a Bulgarian with a very rich imagination.”²¹⁶ In fact, these desperate attempts of the new country to expand its history are rather the consequence of an enormous national identity crisis and historical inferiority complex. Indeed, most FYROM citizens of Slavic origin publicly proclaim a Macedonian ethnic identity and yet, this ethnic identity continues to be very insecure, particularly taking into account that prominent FYROM figures continue to apply for Bulgarian citizenship. Even the previous Macedonian Prime Minister Lyubcho Georgievski (1998-2002) was granted Bulgarian citizenship in 2006, because of his citizenship application, declaring Bulgarian origin. Georgievski moved to Bulgaria, where he published his book with the self-evident title *Facing the Truth* in order to urge Macedonian citizens to accept their Bulgarian heritage.²¹⁷

The other major challenge to Macedonia, particularly after the expected independence of Kosovo, will be the accommodation of the large 25% Albanian minority. The ethnic polarization between Macedonians and the ethnic Albanians, who live in the northwestern parts of Macedonia along the Albanian border, might lead to another Balkan conflict and to state boundary changes.²¹⁸ The FYROM government and historians, however, continue to base their national identity on the negation of Bulgarian and Greek national identities and history.

²¹⁶ Dimitrov, *Desette Lazhi* [The Ten Lies], 79.

²¹⁷ Lyubcho Georgievski, *S lice kam istinata* [Facing the Truth] (Sofia: Balkani, 2007).

²¹⁸ Eleni Koppa, “Ethnic Albanians,” 37-40.

These aggressive attempts of the FYROM to appropriate the historical and cultural heritage of its neighbours, as well as the prevalent ethnic nationalism in both Greece and Bulgaria, led to a multifaceted conflict with Greece and Bulgaria, which involved governments, history and language. The Greek governments since 1991 have opposed the international recognition of FYROM under its constitutional name 'Republic of Macedonia,' because the official Greek position is that Macedonia was and continues to be an integral part of the Hellenic civilization and no one else could use the term Macedonia.²¹⁹ On the one hand, the Greek position could be more flexible, because the sharing of a geographic name between different countries is not uncommon. To name a few examples: the official name of Romania implies a Roman link, Belgium's southernmost province is called Luxembourg, exactly the same as the name of the independent country Luxembourg, whereas Limburg is the name of a Dutch province that borders a Belgian province with the same name. On the other hand, the FYROM went further than the above mentioned countries. The new state not only claims the name Macedonia, but also the right to exploit solely as part of the FYROM historical heritage a significant part of the ancient Hellenic history, culture and even mythology and literature. Furthermore, the new country claims that 250,000 ethnic Macedonians living in Greece, ignoring the self-identification of at least 210,000 of these people as Greeks. Thus, the Greek government entrenched its position to prevent an escalation of the conflict and future irredentist claims to Greece. In its domestic policy, the Greek authorities continued to deny the existence of Greek citizens with ethnic Macedonian identity. Left-wing Greeks, calling for the recognition of the new republic under its official name, such as the six members of the group 'Organization for the Reconstruction of the KKE' were jailed for six and a half months in January 1992 for the distribution of placards

²¹⁹ Tziampiris, *Greece, European Political Cooperation*, 50-67.

with the slogan 'Recognize Independent Slav Macedonia.' The two Slav Macedonian activists, Christos Sideropoulos and Tasos Boulis were sentenced to one year and five months imprisonment in 1993 for their interview with the Greek magazine *ENA*, in which they claimed that Greece violates the right of the Slav Macedonian minority in Greece. The Vinozhito [Rainbow] Party of the Slav Macedonians in Greece, organized by former students in Skopje, had its head office in Florina attacked by a mob in September 1995 and the Greek police refused to intervene.²²⁰

Bulgaria was the first country to recognize FYROM independence under its official name 'Republic of Macedonia' on 14th January 1992. However, the official Bulgarian government position continues to be that even though FYROM exists as a country, there is no Macedonian nation, because the Slavic inhabitants of the FYROM are ethnic Bulgarians. Furthermore, the Bulgarian government denies the existence of a separate Macedonian language, considering it another standard of the Bulgarian language. In 1992, the first democratic Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev justified the official Bulgarian position with the statement:

We have a common history, a common language, a common religion... For the vast majority of Bulgarians, and for our historians, the idea has therefore arisen that Macedonia is not a nation in its own right. But politically, we cannot allow ourselves to impose a national identity on the Macedonians. They have the right to choose for themselves - that is the most essential democratic right of the individual.²²¹

The Macedonian government claims that there are 250,000 to 300,000 ethnic Macedonians living in Bulgaria, but all the national censuses after the fall of the Iron Curtain indicate no more than 4,000 (0.8%) Bulgarian citizens declaring Macedonian identity. It is apparent that such an insignificant number of the population does not pose any separatist

²²⁰ Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 169-71.

²²¹ Victor Roudmetof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria and the Macedonian Question* (Wesport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 40.

threat to Bulgaria. Indeed the United Macedonian Organization (UMO) Ilinden, with headquarters in Blagoevgrad, demands minority rights for the ethnic Macedonians in Bulgaria but it has about 1000 active members in Bulgaria. The ethnic party could not collect the 5,000 signatures that it needed in order to be registered as a Bulgarian political party. Thus, it is also not a threat to Bulgarian security and yet, the Bulgarian authorities banned the party a number of times on the premise that this party is financed by Skopje and Belgrade and the Bulgarian police constantly harass and arrest UMO Ilinden activists. On the other hand, the restored right-wing political party IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization), whose activists are the sons and grandsons of refugees from Macedonia to Bulgaria, take Bulgarian nationalist positions and lobby in the Bulgarian parliament against the recognition of the Macedonian nation and language and thus, they have full freedom for their political activity in Bulgaria.²²²

The Greek and Bulgarian historians seem to have united in denying the existence of the Macedonian nation and language. The Bulgarian historiography is still occupied with revealing historical falsifications and manipulations and publishing of monographs, which reveal the Bulgarian identity of the medieval Bulgarian tsars, particularly Samuil, as well as the Bulgarian revolutionaries from Macedonia in the 19th century. The Bulgarian nationalist historian and CEO of the Bulgarian National Museum of History attempted to turn Balkan history into a reality show, announcing that he would give a €100,000 prize to anyone, who shows him a primary document, indicating that Tsar Samuil or Dimitar Miladinov and numerous other historical figures declared a Macedonian identity, instead of a Bulgarian

²²² *Ibid.*, 154-5; Bonka Stoyanova-Boneva and Stefan E. Nikolov, In the Search of the “Bigfoot”: Competing Identities of the Pirin Macedonia (Bulgaria) Population,” In Victor Roudometof, ed. *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics*. (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 237-58; Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity*, 42-6.

identity.²²³ Dimitrov's confidence in the historical facts does not seem to be the same in the present self-identification of the Macedonian citizens. Indeed, Dimitrov asserts that the contemporary young people in Skopje have a strong Bulgarian national identity but he never offered a bounty of € 100, 000 for some Macedonian census data or opinion poll proving his thesis. The Bulgarian historians, such as Veselin Angelov, Nikola Achkov and Kosta Tzarnushanov continue to publish their research, backed with many primary documents in order to prove that the term 'Macedonian' when applied to Slavs has always meant only a regional identity of the Bulgarians, similar to Ontarian, or New Englander, whereas the ancient Macedonians were Greeks.²²⁴ The Bulgarian linguists also support the Bulgarian government position that the Macedonian language is a Bulgarian dialect and thus, it is another literary standard of the Bulgarian language.²²⁵

Greek historiography does not tolerate any use of the term "Macedonian" for non-Hellenic ethnic groups or languages. Spyridon Sfetas and Kyriakos Kentrotis argue that the Macedonian language was a Greek Doric dialect, spoken by the ancient Macedonians. Similar to their Bulgarian colleagues, Sfetas and Kentrotis also perceive the modern Macedonian as "Skopje dialect" of the Bulgarian language with a Serbian alphabet and some Serbian terms that were not enough to "de-Bulgarianize it."²²⁶ As residents of Salonica, these historians, working together in the Institute of Balkan Studies with Vasilis Gounaris and Evangelos Kofos, are particularly active on the Macedonian issue. A minority of Greek

²²³ Dimitrov, *Desette Lazhi* [The Ten Lies], 7.

²²⁴ Tzarnushanov, *The Macedonianism*; Achkov, *Makedoniya v nashata istoriya* [Macedonia in Our History]; Angelov, *Makedonskata Kârvava Koleda* [The Macedonian Bloody Christmas].

²²⁵ Slavka Velichkova, *Tendencii v ezikovata politka na Republika Makedoniya* [Trends in the Linguistic Policy of the Republic of Macedonia] (Sofia: BAN, 1991), 11-20; Lyubomir Andreychin, *Istoriya na nasheto ezikovo stroitelstvo* [History of Our Linguistic Building] (Sofia: Prosveta, 1996), 5-10.

²²⁶ Spyridon Sfetas and Kyriakos Kentrotis, "Skopje: In Search of an Identity and International Recognition," *Balkan Studies* (35), 1994, 367-8.

historians, such as the late Kostas Kazazis²²⁷ and the Greek-American scholar Anastasia Karakasidou²²⁸ challenge these popular perceptions. Kazazis attempted to remind the Greek public that ancient history does not give the Greeks a copyright over the name “Macedonia”,²²⁹ whereas Karakasidou explores the emergence of a Slav Macedonian identity among the Slavophones in western Greek (Aegean) Macedonia.²³⁰ Such scholars are boycotted and considered national traitors by both academics and the general public in Greece. Anastasia Karakasidou, particularly, as Victor Roudometof put it “turned into a target for nationalist hysteria.”²³¹

The governments of the three countries involved in the Macedonian Question fall into the trap of ethnic nationalism and thus, apply a double standard in their policies. The FYROM government does not recognize the right of its citizens to found pro-Bulgarian organizations and yet, it demands full recognition of the Macedonian minorities in Greece and Bulgaria, while largely exaggerating their number. On the other hand, the Bulgarian and Greek governments deny the existence of any ethnic Macedonians within their borders and suppress people who openly declare a Macedonian identity and yet, the Bulgarian government demands a full recognition of the pro-Bulgarian organizations in the FYROM. The Bulgarian and Greek governments have no objections to the recognition of Croatian and Bosnian as separate languages from Serbian, because this recognition does not infringe on Bulgarian and Greek national interests. The historical debate among the three countries with the task to prove or negate the existence of a Macedonian ethnic identity indicates that, while

²²⁷ Kostas Kazazis, “Some Discordant Greek Voices on ‘The Macedonian Question’” In Christina Kramer and Brian Cook, eds. *Guard the Work Well bound: Proceedings of the Third North American-Macedonian Conference on Macedonian Studies* (Indiana Slavic Studies, Volume 10, 1999).

²²⁸ Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*.

²²⁹ Kazazis, “Some Discordant Greek Voices,” 127-34.

²³⁰ Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*.

²³¹ Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity*, 47.

the Macedonians deny their non-Macedonian past, both the Bulgarians and the Greeks deny the Macedonian present of the FYROM.

As Victor Roudometof concluded, the proclamation of national identity is “a process and not a quality inscribed permanently in the souls of the people.”²³² The main issue, however, is that both Balkan governments and scholars seem to genuinely believe that the ethnic/national identity is something primordial, natural, and eternal. Unless the three countries shift their entrenched positions, a constructive dialogue is not possible on the Macedonian Question. They also have to recognize that the existence of a regional Macedonian identity in Bulgaria and Greece does not negate the existence of an ethnic Macedonian identity in the FYROM and vice versa. These ideas of ethnic nationalism and ethnic identity were also brought to the New World by the ethnic diasporas of the three countries. Various ethnic Macedonian, Greek and Bulgarian organizations and individuals in Toronto continue to use most of the above mentioned historical facts in order to prove that they have the sole right over the name Macedonia.

²³² *Ibid.*, 102.

CHAPTER 3

A HISTORY OF MACEDONIAN IMMIGRATION TO CANADA, 1900-1940

Until the Second World War the terms ‘Macedonia’ and ‘Macedonian’ were used in Canada and the USA by immigrants from all three parts of Macedonia exclusively as geographic, and not as ethnic terms. The most prominent non-Balkan scholars, who deal with the Macedonian diasporas, seem to be unanimous that until 1945, the majority of the Macedonian immigrants of Slavic origin identified themselves as Bulgarians and, more rarely, as Greeks. Victor Roudometof acknowledges the ethnic identity of the early immigrants, pointing out that: “In the case of the Macedonian diasporas, there are three distinct groups holding out different images of Macedonia. These are the Greek Macedonians, the Bulgarian Macedonians, and the post-1945 Macedonians. The last group is by far the most recent addition to the list [...]”¹ The American anthropologist Loring Danforth, who became famous for his work on the identity conflict between the Greek and Macedonian diasporas in Australia, also confirms the observations of Roudometof and maintains that the reason for the non-existence of a conflict over Macedonia in the USA is that the descendants of the 50,000 Macedono-Bulgarians from the early 20th century still dominate the community. They established the Macedonian Political Organization in Fort Wayne in 1922, which still publishes its newspaper, the *Macedonian Tribune* [Makedonska Tribuna] in Bulgarian and in Danforth’s words, it “promotes the view that Macedonians are Bulgarians.”² Regarding Canada, Danforth claims that the ethnic Macedonian-Canadian

¹ Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 107.

² Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 87.

diaspora gained strength in the early 1960s, when large numbers of Yugoslav Macedonians poured into Toronto.³ Albert Sonnichsen, who had the opportunity to talk to Macedonian-Bulgarian rebels himself during his Balkan journey in the early 20th century, offered the following comment to the U.S. political scientist Emily Greene Balch: “I hope you’re not making any racial distinctions between Bulgars and Macedonians. [...]The distinction between Bulgars from Bulgaria and those from Macedonia is purely political.”⁴

The primary subject of the above mentioned scholars was not the Macedonian immigration to Toronto, and they did not support their claims with primary sources. Lillian Petroff and Peter Vasiliadis, however, are Canadian scholars, who wrote respectively a Ph.D. dissertation and an M.A. thesis, followed by monographs on the Macedonian community in Toronto. Both scholars used primary archival sources, as well as oral interviews and both claimed that there was an ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto before the Second World War.⁵ In fact, Petroff was more moderate and admitted that the first immigrants from Macedonia initially gravitated to the Bulgarian community and used the Bulgarian language.⁶ Vasiliadis, on the other hand, boldly wrote about an ethnic Macedonian community as early as 1903-1910, which published the first “Macedonian” newspaper in 1912, the *Balkanska Zvezda* [Balkan Star in Bulgarian]⁷ with the strange aim, for a supposedly Macedonian newspaper, “to foster Bulgarian patriotism.”⁸ Such interesting contradictions persuaded this author to review all available archival sources and taped oral interviews of pre-WW II

³ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴ Emily Greene Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens*. (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910), 275.

⁵ Lillian Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers: The Macedonian Community in Toronto to 1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 173-175; Peter Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?: Identity and Ethnicity Among the Toronto Macedonians* (NY: AMS Press Inc., 1989), 154-250.

⁶ Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 47-134.

⁷ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 195.

⁸ Duncan McLaren, *Ontario Ethno-Cultural Newspapers, 1835-1972* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 124.

immigrants from Macedonia. They are accessible either at the Robarts Library of the University of Toronto or in the Macedonian and Bulgarian collections of the Multicultural History Society (MHSO) at the University of Toronto. The archival and published primary sources and oral interviews of the early immigrants from Macedonia confirmed their Bulgarian ethnic identity and Bulgarian native language and thus, these document collections justified the hypothesis of the author that the ethnic Macedonian identity did not emerge before the 1940s. My research in the MHSO collections also revealed a series of intentionally mistranslated archival document titles and misplaced oral interviews, as well as incorrect summaries in English, of the contents of microfilms and other archival and printed primary sources. The result was a blatant manipulation and falsification of a series of important documents, which has to be confronted and corrected as soon as possible. These outrageous manipulations of archival documents will be revealed in this chapter.

Due to the controversies, misinterpretations and attempts at falsifying the historical facts concerning the first immigrants from Macedonia who settled in Toronto in the early 20th century, it is necessary to trace their settlement and ethnic identity expression through their first churches, cultural and political organizations and newspapers.

3.1: 1900-1940: From Sojourners to Immigrants

The economic situation in the region of Macedonia was critical during the whole 19th century. Many families lost their small patches of land and peasant men of working age left their homes to go to big cities all over the Balkan Peninsula and even to Central Europe in search of work. One of the early immigrants to Toronto, Anastas Petroff, recalled during his interview with Lillian Petroff that, when he was a young boy, his father worked in Romania

nearly year-round to support the family, ploughing and harvesting in the summer and fall, and working as a cook in the winter.⁹ These sojourning expeditions became known as *pechalba* – a Bulgarian word for profit and the temporary workers became known as *pechalbari* – literally people, who go somewhere for profit, or in brief, sojourners, temporary workers.¹⁰

Economic conditions, however, were poor not only in the region of Macedonia in the 1890s, but also in the rest of Europe. Canadian steamship companies, perfectly aware of conditions in the region, began promoting campaigns for immigration to Canada and they offered fares for the trans-Atlantic journey for only \$ 20 and less at the beginning of the 20th century.¹¹ Canadian immigration officials welcomed contract labour as a way of ensuring that immigrants would not rely on charity, but would help populate Canada's vast western reaches. Dincho Ralley, a Macedono-Bulgarian immigrant, whose family began migrating to Toronto in 1907 from the Aegean Macedonian village of Zagorichane, recalled an English-speaking labour agent in the Aegean Macedonian city of Florina who arranged for several men from Ralley's village to emigrate. Within a few years, most of them had railroad or factory jobs near Toronto's heavily-industrial Eastern Avenue.¹²

The Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising of 1903, brutally crushed by the Turks, added serious political reasons for migration. In fact, Dincho Ralley also noted during his interview

⁹ Anastas Petroff, interviewed by Lillian Petroff, 6 December 1975 (Multicultural History Society of Ontario Macedonian collection).

¹⁰ Harry Vjekoslav Herman, *Men In White Aprons: A Study of Ethnicity and Occupation* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Ltd., 1978), 17.

¹¹ Peter Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?: Identity and Ethnicity Among the Toronto Macedonians* (NY: AMS Press Inc., 1989), 154-6.

¹² Dincho Ralley, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 26 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

with Irene Markoff that his father's reason for migrating from Macedonia to Canada was a flight from oppression.¹³

The data provided by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism indicated that there were only 7 Bulgarians in Canada in 1900-1901 and 81 Greeks. A decade later, the Bulgarians numbered 6,638 and the Greeks 1,523. In 1913, the number of Bulgarians dropped to 1,270 and that of the Greeks to 898, most probably because of the Balkan wars.¹⁴ Kostadin Gurdev estimated that at least 500 Bulgarian immigrants from Bulgaria proper and Macedonia left Toronto to volunteer in the Bulgarian army during the Balkan wars (1912-1913).¹⁵ It is difficult to estimate the exact number of Bulgarian Canadian volunteers who joined the Bulgarian Army, but even a brief analysis of the census suggests a much larger number than 500. These immigrant soldiers were exclusively Macedono-Bulgarians. Both church records and historians recognized the fact that 80% to 90% of the first Bulgarian Immigrants to Canada came predominantly from the region of Macedonia in the first half of the 20th century.¹⁶ Similar to Bulgarian immigrants, numerous Greek Canadians from Toronto, including the first Greek priest, the Rev. Amvrossios Parashakis, left Canada to enlist in the Greek army.¹⁷

The first Macedono-Bulgarians came to Canada from the Aegean part of Macedonia, present-day Northern Greece. They came from villages around the cities of Kostur (Kastoria) and Lerin (Florina). Foto Tomev, who immigrated to Toronto in 1915, was able to find the

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups-Book IV* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969), 238-45.

¹⁵ Kostadin Gurdev, *Bългарската Емиграция в Канада* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada]. (Sofia: Marin Drinov Academic Press, 1994), 44.

¹⁶ Lillian Petroff, "Macedonians," in Paul Robert Magocsi, ed., *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 289; Gurdev, *Bългарската емиграция* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 21-40; -----, *50th Anniversary Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral: (1910-1960) 50th Anniversary Jubilee Almanac* (Toronto: SS. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral, 1960), 30-5.

¹⁷ George D. Vlassis, *The Greeks in Canada* (Ottawa: n.p., 1953), 187.

names of the first migrants from the village of Zhelevo in 1903, and they included: Elia Tanasov, Dimitar and Vasil Sidorov, Petko Andonov, Trayko Florov, etc.¹⁸ These first migrants came to Canada temporarily, on pechalba, to earn money as soon as possible and to go back to their home villages. Migrants to Canada concentrated largely in Toronto. Over half of these were from the Castoria (Kostur) area of Aegean Macedonia with the vast majority of the remainder coming from Florina, Prespa, Ohrid, and Bitola. Of the 1,090 Macedono-Bulgarians in Toronto in 1910, only eight men had children with them. One third, or 340, were bachelors, and 377 were married, though almost all their wives remained in Macedonia.¹⁹

The Macedono-Bulgarians initially went to the East end of Toronto, around King Street East, Eastern Avenue and Keele Street. There, they found many jobs, such as in meat-packing and on the railways. They lived in crammed houses –15 in six rooms for example and they shared their daily costs.²⁰ Macedono-Bulgarian migrants spent virtually nothing beyond the basic necessities of life while away from home. A two-year stay in Toronto, for instance, if spent in a thrifty manner, yielded roughly \$400 in savings, a vast sum when compared to rates of savings in Macedonia.²¹

According to the internal community census, there were only eight Macedono-Bulgarians with their families in Toronto in 1910. Such people were usually political immigrants, former *Ilindenci* (participants in the Ilinden Uprising of 1903) or chetniks (guerilla fighters). By 1915, however, there were 43 families and 49 children. The political

¹⁸ F. S. Tomev, *Short History of Zhelevo Village, Macedonia* (Toronto: Zhelevo Brotherhood in the City of Toronto, 1971), 75.

¹⁹ -----, *50th Anniversary Sts. Cyril and Methody*, 35.

²⁰ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 170-1.

²¹ Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 15.

situation in Macedonia, and the economic opportunities in Toronto persuaded increasing numbers of Macedono-Bulgarians to settle permanently²².

During the First World War some Macedono-Bulgarians were treated as enemy aliens in Canada, because of their Bulgarian or Ottoman passports. But some of these early immigrants even served in the Canadian army during the Great War. The period of war was difficult and many foreigners lost their jobs. The Macedono-Bulgarians were able to immigrate to Canada and to bring over their families in the 1920s, when Canadian restrictions on immigration started to be liberalized. Many new immigrants even wanted to live among English-Canadians, not in boarding houses and to study English. Such immigrants faced the hostility of their older compatriots, who thought that in this way, the young people would be alienated from the Bulgarian culture. A concerned immigrant, for instance, burned the English books of his brother to keep him safe from Anglo-Saxon influence.²³

From the 1920s on, the Macedono-Bulgarians started to shift their primary loyalty from the village to a larger Bulgarian common identity and community. People from different villages started to cluster on the same streets and the community as a whole began to move north of Queen Street and east of the Don River, because they wanted to avoid prejudice against them and residential mixing with other ethnic groups.²⁴

Because of the Depression after 1929, few Macedono-Bulgarian and Hellenic Macedonian immigrants could enter Canada. However, the settlers who were already in Toronto managed to organize a number of benevolent societies, churches, political

²² *Ibid.*, 10, 68.

²³ *Ibid.*, 69-71.

²⁴ Gurdev, *Bălgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 40-55; Dincho Ralley, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 26 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

organizations, newspapers, Saturday schools and cultural events, which helped in the development of a very active community life.²⁵

During the period 1900-1940, most Slavic immigrants from Macedonia had a Bulgarian ethnic identity, but there were also some ethnic Bulgarians from Aegean Macedonia (*grkomani/Patriarchists*), who also came to Toronto and joined the Greek community in the city. Peter Chimbos pointed out that most early 20th century Greeks who entered Canada were peasants from the Peloponnesus, alongside some wealthy Greeks from other regions, who wanted to escape their conscription into the Ottoman army. Chimbos noted, however, that some Macedonian fur traders from the city of Kastoria also joined this immigration wave.²⁶ It is not quite clear how many of these immigrants were ethnic Greeks and how many were ethnic Bulgarians from Aegean Macedonia, who identified themselves as Greeks (*grkomani*). Kostadin Gurdev estimated that at least a few hundred *grkomani* were active in the Greek community and participated in the founding of the first Greek Orthodox parish in Toronto – St. George in 1909.²⁷

Peter Vassiliadis attempted to also find Vardar Macedonian immigrants among the Yugoslav immigrants in Toronto before the Second World War.²⁸ The immigration from Vardar Macedonia in the first half of the 20th century, however, was insignificant, compared to the Aegean Macedonian immigration. The Vardar Macedonian immigrants had also a very strong Bulgarian identity and usually came to Canada after some time spent in Bulgaria.

²⁵ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 58.

²⁶ Peter D. Chimbos, *The Canadian Odyssey: The Greek Experience in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1980), 24.

²⁷ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 125.

²⁸ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 414.

Thus, they avoided the Serbian communities.²⁹ Figure 4 below takes into consideration only the statistics on Greek and Bulgarian immigration to Canada in the period 1900-1940.

Figure 4: Bulgarian and Greek Immigrants in Canada, 1900-1940

(Source: Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. *The Cultural contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups-Book IV*. Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969, 238-42)

| Year | Bulgarians | Greeks |
|------|------------|--------|
| 1900 | 7 | 81 |
| 1901 | 2 | 161 |
| 1902 | N/A | 193 |
| 1903 | N/A | 191 |
| 1904 | N/A | 98 |
| 1905 | 18 | 254 |
| 1906 | 92 | 545 |
| 1907 | 1884 | 1053 |
| 1908 | 63 | 174 |
| 1909 | 495 | 461 |
| 1910 | 985 | 784 |
| 1911 | 1664 | 584 |
| 1912 | 6338 | 1523 |
| 1913 | 1270 | 898 |
| 1914 | 4512 | 1506 |
| 1915 | 1 | 124 |
| 1916 | 0 | 274 |
| 1917 | 0 | 59 |
| 1918 | 0 | 5 |
| 1919 | 1 | 31 |
| 1920 | 4 | 297 |
| 1921 | 26 | 195 |
| 1922 | 15 | 187 |
| 1923 | 163 | 294 |
| 1924 | 170 | 215 |
| 1925 | N/A | 214 |
| 1926 | 87 | 274 |
| 1927 | 240 | 557 |
| 1928 | 265 | 685 |
| 1929 | 301 | 684 |
| 1930 | 353 | 530 |
| 1931 | 14 | 23 |
| 1932 | 12 | 34 |
| 1933 | 12 | 29 |

²⁹ Rev. Vasil Mihailoff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 7 February 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

| | | |
|------|----|-----|
| 1934 | 5 | 39 |
| 1935 | 12 | 49 |
| 1936 | 21 | 73 |
| 1937 | 31 | 97 |
| 1938 | 25 | 121 |
| 1939 | 23 | 128 |
| 1940 | 7 | 49 |

As the statistics in Figure 4 indicate, Bulgarian immigration, even at its height, never approached the magnitude of immigration by other comparable southern or eastern European nationalities. Practically nonexistent before 1900, Bulgarian immigration also occurred later and thus, it was almost invisible for the Canadian public and government, except during the periods of the two World Wars, when Bulgaria was a German ally. The first Greek immigrants came to Canada in the second half of the 19th century and yet until the Second World War, they also came in very low numbers. On the other hand, Greek immigration increased during the first decades of the Cold War (1945-1971), when 107,780 Greeks settled permanently in Canada.³⁰

3.2: Language and Ethnic Identity

Regardless of their relatively small numbers, Macedono-Bulgarians and Hellenic Macedonians demonstrated either a strong Bulgarian or a Greek ethnic identity through their churches, cultural and political organizations and ethnic press. As witnesses and participants in the pre-WWII immigration wrote in 1960: “The vast majority of Macedonian Slavs were

³⁰ Chimbos, *The Canadian Odyssey*, 29.

plainly and simply Bulgarians from Macedonia – and often to the point of fanaticism – and they called their simple Slav speech Bulgarian.”³¹

As already mentioned, the first Macedono-Bulgarian immigrants came to Toronto as sojourners and they decided to settle permanently after the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 and this trend of permanent settlement continued during the inter-war period of 1920-1939.³² As many as 90 % of the first sojourners were peasants and they worked as labourers or as small business owners.³³ Most of them had a very strong village identity and associating with others from the same village or region was common. Hence, soon after their arrival in Canada, the Macedono-Bulgarians started to organize benevolent associations and mutual benefit societies named after their villages. This helped the people of the same village and thus, fulfilled the need for a social safety net in the new land. The mutual benefit societies were also a focal point for informal communication, as well as for community campaigns to raise money for a cause or plan social events like dances, banquets, and picnics. All bylaws and other organizational documents were written in standard Bulgarian as late as the 1960s but the Bulgarian language was gradually replaced by English in all official documents after the 1960s.³⁴

Some immigrants, such as Nasto Jigeroff and Toma Petroff, who came from small Macedonian villages could not boast a university education, were, nevertheless, very active in organizing the Bulgarian ethnic community. Nasto Jigeroff was born in the village of Oshchima, near Kastoria, Aegean Macedonia in 1879. He participated in the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising of 1903 and settled in Toronto in 1912. Jigeroff was among the

³¹ M.P.O. *Macedonians in North America: An Outline* (Toronto: Coordinating Committee of the Youth Sections with MPO of the USA and Canada, 1960), 10.

³² Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 170-1.

³³ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 58.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 117-44.

founders of both pre-WWII Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox churches in Toronto (St. Cyril and Methody and St. George) and an active participant and co-founder of the Macedonian Political Organization (MPO) Chapter “Lyuben Dimitrov” in Toronto. He died in 1975, at the age 96. Toma Petroff was another Ilinden rebel from Aegean Macedonia, who was one of the founders of the Bulgarian Mutual Benefit Society Homeland in 1935.³⁵ In fact, as Peter Vassiliadis acknowledged, the devastating outcome of the Balkan wars for Bulgaria prompted an increasing number of Macedono-Bulgarians to settle permanently in Toronto and to preserve even a “greater loyalty to Bulgarian institutions.”³⁶

Once they settled permanently, the Bulgarian Canadians also needed well-educated intellectuals, who could publish books and newspapers and organize Bulgarian schools and churches in order to preserve their Bulgarian culture and ethnic identity. Such highly educated leaders of the Bulgarian Canadian community were undoubtedly Archimandrite Theofilact, also known as Dr. Dimitar G. Mallin (Malincheff) and John Grudeff. Due to speculations with the names of both Bulgarian Canadians, it is necessary to shed some light on their ethnic identity. In his interview with Lillian Petroff, Anastas Petroff claimed that Dr. Mallin and John Grudeff were leaders of the ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto before the Second World War.³⁷ Indeed, they were very influential among the Macedonian immigrants in Toronto, but only if the term ‘Macedonian’ is used as a synonym for ‘Bulgarian’ or ‘Macedono-Bulgarian.’ In fact, both Dr. Malincheff and Grudeff were born outside the geographic region of Macedonia, in Bulgaria proper. Dr. Malincheff (Theofilact) was born in the village of Vrachesh, near the Bulgarian town of Botevgrad (former Orhanie),

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 77-8.

³⁶ Vassiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 196.

³⁷ Anastas Petroff, interviewed by Lillian Petroff, 6 December 1975 (Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Macedonian collection).

whereas John Grudeff was born in the village of Gramatikovo in 1894, near the Black sea coast.³⁸

Archimandrite Theofilact was sent to North America in 1908 by the Bulgarian Holy Synod. During his mandate he initiated the creation of four Bulgarian orthodox churches in North America, among which was the first Bulgarian church in Toronto in 1911 – the Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral of Sts. Cyril and Methody. In 1913, Theofilact published *The First Bulgarian-English Pocket Dictionary* with 18,000 words.³⁹ This dictionary was very popular among the Macedono-Bulgarian communities in both Canada and USA, because it contained not only words, but also a great number of useful common phrases for various situations, related to accommodation, job search, physical well-being, and travelling between Canada and the United States.⁴⁰ Archimandrite Theofilact left the priesthood and in 1921 graduated from the Medical Faculty of the University of Toronto to become the first Bulgarian physician in Canada. In 1922, he opened the first Bulgarian pharmacy in Toronto.⁴¹

John Grudeff left his native village of Gramatikovo to study at the American School in Salonica. On the question if his classmates were Macedonians, Grudeff answered Irene Markoff that: “We had no Macedonians back then. We were all Bulgarians, you see. I was the only Bulgarian from Bulgaria. All others were Bulgarians from Macedonia.”⁴² Grudeff came to Canada in 1910, when he was only 16 years old. Initially, he worked on railway construction and in a sugar factory. He was determined, however, to continue his education and in 1922, he graduated from the University of Toronto with a B.A. in Literature and Fine

³⁸ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 218.

³⁹ Dimitar D. Malincheff, *The First Bulgarian-English Pocket Dictionary*. Toronto: n.p., 1913. MHSO Macedonian Collection (Microfilm).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 218.

⁴² John Grudeff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 9 February 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

Arts. In 1926, he graduated from the Law Faculty of Toronto and thus, he became the first Bulgarian-Canadian lawyer. John Grudeff was very involved in community life. He was a good friend of Dr. Malincheff (Archimandrite Theofilact) and he founded one of the first Bulgarian benevolent societies in Toronto – the William Gladstone Benevolent Society.⁴³ Grudeff and Malincheff wanted to preserve and strengthen the Bulgarian identity of the Macedono-Bulgarian newcomers. Dr. Malincheff edited the first Bulgarian weekly newspaper in Toronto, *Balkanska Zvezda* [Balkan Star], published in the period 1912-1913 in Bulgarian with the aim “to foster Bulgarian patriotism,”⁴⁴ as already mentioned.

The Macedono-Bulgarian settlers did not believe that they could lose their Bulgarian ethnic identity even if they had to face the discrimination of mainstream society. They often feared, however, that their children would lose interest in Bulgaria and its culture and language and they would completely assimilate into North American culture. Thus, until the 1920s, Macedono-Bulgarian parents were suspicious, if not hostile, to the younger generation’s desire to get an English-language education. They believed that education in North American schools would alienate their children from their parents’ native Bulgarian language and culture. In order to preserve their language, the Macedono-Bulgarian immigrants in Toronto opened their Bulgarian-language school in 1915 in collaboration with the existing Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox parish of Sts. Cyril and Methody. They appointed Kuzo Temelcoff, a teacher from Aegean Macedonia, as the school’s first instructor.⁴⁵ Thus, the Bulgarians from Macedonia, similar to the Bulgarian immigrants from Bulgaria proper, wrote and spoke in English and Bulgarian.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ McLaren, *Ontario Ethno-Cultural Newspapers*, 124.

⁴⁵ -----*.50th Anniversary Sts. Cyril and Methody*, 42.

The Macedono-Bulgarian community fulfilled its need for a cultural life with a community theatre that held performances in the Parish Hall of the Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral of Sts. Cyril and Methody. Lillian Petroff claimed that: “Acting as a bulwark of Macedonian nationality, the village church was the centre around which Christian villagers who spoke Bulgaro-Macedonian rallied.”⁴⁶ The so-called ‘Bulgaro-Macedonian language’ is a neologism, unknown in linguistic literature. Petroff used it merely to dilute the fact that the Macedono-Bulgarians spoke Bulgarian and had a Bulgarian ethnic identity. In fact, the Bulgarian theatre favoured patriotic and nationalist plays and even Lillian Petroff admitted that the so-called Macedonian nationalist plays included: “The play *Borislav*, [which] chronicled the life of a Bulgarian King.”⁴⁷

The Macedono-Bulgarian women also actively participated in the church and community cultural and educational life. Lillian Petroff surprisingly pointed out that, women instructed “young ladies in the Bulgarian language school – Bulgarian was the language of liturgy and literature.”⁴⁸ Hence, even if the only source on early Bulgarian immigrants is Lillian Petroff, the facts speak for themselves, if the readers ignore the contradictions and the neologisms.

The pillar of Bulgarian ethnic identity in North America throughout the 20th Century became the Macedonian Political Organization, founded in 1922 in Fort Wayne, Indiana and its newspaper *Makedonska Tribuna* [Macedonian Tribune]. It has been published in Bulgarian and English since 1927. MPO was the North American arm of IMRO, i.e. a Bulgarian nationalist organization, very conservative and a natural right-wing ally of the

⁴⁶ Lillian Petroff, “Prosperity and Patriotism: Macedonian Theatre in Toronto, 1910-1940,” In *Polyphony*, Fall/Winter, 5(2), 1983, 83.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁴⁸ Lillian Petroff, “Women and Ethnicity,” In *Polyphony*, 8(1-2), 1986, 26.

Bulgarian Orthodox church. In Toronto, as in the other cities of North America, the local MPO chapter Pravda [Justice] worked closely with the Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox parish of Sts Cyril and Methody and almost all parishioners became MPO members.⁴⁹

By the 1930s, the Macedono-Bulgarians had developed a strong loyalty and attachment, not only to Macedonia and Bulgaria as a whole, but also to Canada. In a speech to the parishioners of Sts. Cyril and Methody Church in 1927, Dr. Malincheff reminded his compatriots that they should not forget their homeland and yet, they should be also “worthy citizen[s] of Canada.”⁵⁰ Lillian Petroff called this development a “double loyalty,” which “no priest fresh from Bulgaria or MPO ideologue dared to do other than encourage it.”⁵¹ The emergence of this double national identity was a natural process. Initially, when the Macedono-Bulgarians were sojourners, their hearts and thoughts were attached only to the Old World and Canada was merely a land of opportunity for a temporary stay. However, once they decided to settle permanently in Toronto after the Balkan wars and particularly in the inter-war period, their attachment to Canada grew. The future of the Bulgarian language in the community was also doomed, especially among the second generation and due to the fact that all interaction and business with the mainstream society had to be in English. The First World War also led to pressure on the Bulgarian Canadians to abandon their native language. On September 25th 1918, an Order-in-Council banned all printed materials in fourteen different ‘enemy languages,’ which included Bulgarian, because Bulgaria was a German ally during the war. The newly founded newspaper *Zora* [Dawn], published in

⁴⁹ Rev. Vasil Mihailoff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 7 February 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection); M.P.O. *Macedonians in North America*, 7-10.

⁵⁰ Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 173.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Bulgarian by Dr. Dimitar Malincheff, had to stop serving the Macedono-Bulgarian community.⁵²

Even though the right-wing MPO dominated the political life of the Bulgarian communities across North America until the 1940s, in the 1930s some left-wing organizations started to appear. Under the orders of the Yugoslav and Soviet Communist parties, Dincho Ralley, George Pirinsky and other Communists created organizations such as Macedono-Bulgarian Club Christo Botev, the Macedonian People's League, which had pro-communist newspapers published in Bulgarian and yet criticized the MPO as a "Bulgarian reactionary and fascist organization." They appealed to the Macedono-Bulgarian community to accept a new ethnic identity – Macedonian.⁵³ George Pirinsky described himself as a "Macedonian by race and Yugoslav by nationality."⁵⁴ The mission of Pirinsky was a total fiasco, because, he could not attract more than a handful of supporters and when he left the USA in 1951, he moved back to his native Bulgaria and declared a Bulgarian national identity. The story of Pirinsky and his encounters with the FBI were quite interesting and this thesis will deal with his activities in the 1940s. During his interview with the author, Pete James Kondoff also mentioned Pirinsky as a Bulgarian.⁵⁵ Dincho Ralley, who was born in the famous Aegean Macedonian village of Zagorichane in 1893, also declared without any hesitation a Bulgarian ethnic identity in an interview with Irene Markoff in 1977.⁵⁶ Thus, the communist, supposedly Macedonian, scouts abandoned their newly-proclaimed Macedonian identity, even though they preserved their strong attachment to communist ideology. Dincho Ralley admitted to Irene Markoff that he cried when the Bulgarian communist leader George

⁵² McLaren, *Ontario Ethno-Cultural Newspapers*, 124.

⁵³ Dincho Ralley, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 26 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

⁵⁴ Federal Bureau of Investigation, George Pirinsky Papers, File De 100-252, Report of August 15, 1943 (a copy in possession of George Mladenov, personal collection).

⁵⁵ Pete James Kondoff, interviewed by the author, 17 May 2007.

⁵⁶ Dincho Ralley, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 26 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

Dimitrov died in 1948 and as late as the 1970s, he continued to call the right-wing immigrants “reactionary” as opposed to the “progressive” immigrants, i.e. the Communists.⁵⁷

3.3: Benevolent Societies and Church-Building

The history of the Macedono-Bulgarian benevolent societies reflected the ethnic identity of their founders. The story of the first Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox church and the conflict among its parishioners that led to its split and the emergence of another Macedono-Bulgarian Church in 1940 – St. George, was no less interesting. Peter Vassiliadis explained the split of the church as an outright expression of ethnic Macedonian identity,⁵⁸ but his argument is not supported by any primary source.

Kostadin Gurdev estimated that in the period 1907-1913, Bulgarian immigrants in North America founded 30 benevolent and mutual benefit village societies.⁵⁹ Peasants from villages in Aegean Macedonia organized most of these mutual benefit societies and hence, they were named after the original village. Among the first groups to form was Toronto’s Oshchima Benefit Society, named after a village in Aegean Macedonia. The group chose Oshchima native Bozin C. Temof as its first president on October 26, 1907. Dues were set at \$ 3.00 a year, and members received a variety of benefits such as help with funeral and burial costs and sick pay for time off work. Also in Toronto, 36 men and women from the village of Banitza joined together on July 6, 1911, to share their interests, and on that date convened the Banitza Benevolent Society. Hadzi Dimitar Petrov guided the organization through five meetings in its first year of existence. As with its Oshchima predecessor, dues were set at \$

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 281.

⁵⁹ Gurdev, *Bălgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 117.

3.00, and over the next six years membership was extended to those from villages near Banitza, but whose numbers could not justify forming their own societies.⁶⁰

In 1907 villagers from the Aegean Macedonian village of Zhelevo founded Zhelevo Benevolent Society⁶¹ and villagers from another Aegean Macedonian village – Zagorichane – founded the Zagorichane Mutual Benefit Society St. Elijah (Sv. Iliya in Bulgarian).⁶² Due to arguments over the finances of St. Elijah Mutual Benefit Society in 1911, a number of its members founded the *Napredak* [Advancement] Mutual Benefit Society in 1914, but in 1915 they united again under the name “St. Elijah and Napredak” and in 1918 they changed the name of the society to Zagorichane Mutual Benefit Society Mir [Peace].⁶³

The villagers from the Aegean Macedonian village Tarsie founded their village society in the period 1912-1918 and they called it *Bulgarian Economic Mutual Benefit Society Tarsie* in Toronto. It had 100 founding members.⁶⁴ Villagers from other Aegean Macedonian villages, such as Buf, Grabesh, Dambeni and Smardesh also organized their own mutual benefit societies in the period 1907-1940 and in 1918, Macedono-Bulgarians from the Vardar Macedonian town of Bitola founded the *Bitola Bulgarian Mutual Benefit Society in Toronto*.⁶⁵

As, figures 5-8 below demonstrated, all these benevolent associations and societies wrote their founding statutes, bylaws and all other necessary documentation in Bulgarian and later, particularly after the Second World War, predominantly in English. In fact, as late as

⁶⁰ *Constitution of the Benefit Society “Oshchima,”* 1907, revised 1969, MHSO; *Benefit Society Oshchima: 75 Anniversary, 1907-1982,* MHSO; *75th Jubilee Banitza, 1911-1986,* Banitza Benevolent Society, 1986, 12, MHSO.

⁶¹ F.S. Tomev, *Short History of Zhelevo Village, Macedonia* (Toronto: Zhelevo Brotherhood in the City of Toronto, 1971), 75.

⁶² Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 117.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 118-9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 118-24.

1971, the old Zhelevo immigrant, Foto Tomev wrote the history of his native village in English and Bulgarian, because Bulgarian was the only Slavic language he knew.⁶⁶

Researchers from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), who wrote about the Macedonian immigration to Canada were aware of this fact but they managed to hide it. Slave Nikolovski-Katin described all the supposedly ethnic Macedonian village societies in Toronto without any primary sources, such as bylaws, statutes, letters or declarations, which could support his arguments.⁶⁷ Tanas Vražinovski wrote about the history of all mutual benefit societies from all parts of Macedonia in Canada and he included parts of their statutes and bylaws in his two books dealing with the Macedonian Canadians and their community life.⁶⁸ However, he included parts of the original statutes of the village societies only if they were founded after the Second World War and thus, their documentation was only in English, or after the 1960s, in English and Macedonian for the new Yugoslav Macedonian organizations. He published the bylaws of the Oshchima Mutual Benefit Society, founded in 1907, with its text from the revised English version of 1977 and not the original Bulgarian version of 1907.⁶⁹ Vražinovski avoided the inconvenient truth, stating that the official language of all these organizations “is English”,⁷⁰ without any reference to the numerous documents in literary Bulgarian of all the above mentioned organizations.

⁶⁶ Tomev, *Short History of Zhelevo*.

⁶⁷ Slave Nikolovski-Katin, *Makedonski Iselenički Panoptikum* [Macedonian Immigrants' Panopticon] (Bitola: Drushtvo za Nauka i Umetnost, 1996), 15-23.

⁶⁸ Tanas Vražinovski, *Makedonskoto iselenišvo vo Kanada*. [The Macedonian Emigration to Canada] (Kumanovo: Prosveta, 1992), 52-120; Tanas Vražinovski, *Organizacionata struktura na Makedonskoto iselenišvo vo Kanada*. [Organizational Structure of the Macedonian Emigration to Canada] (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1994), 19-74.

⁶⁹ Vražinovski, *Makedonskoto iselenišvo*, 89-90.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 52-3.

Figure 5- The front page of the Statute and By-laws of Zagorichane Mutual Benefit Society Mir [Peace], founded on 15 December, 1918 in Toronto. The text is in literary Bulgarian. (Source: Gurdev, Kostadin. *Bălgarskata Emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada]. Sofia: Marin Drinov Academic Press, 1994, 134).

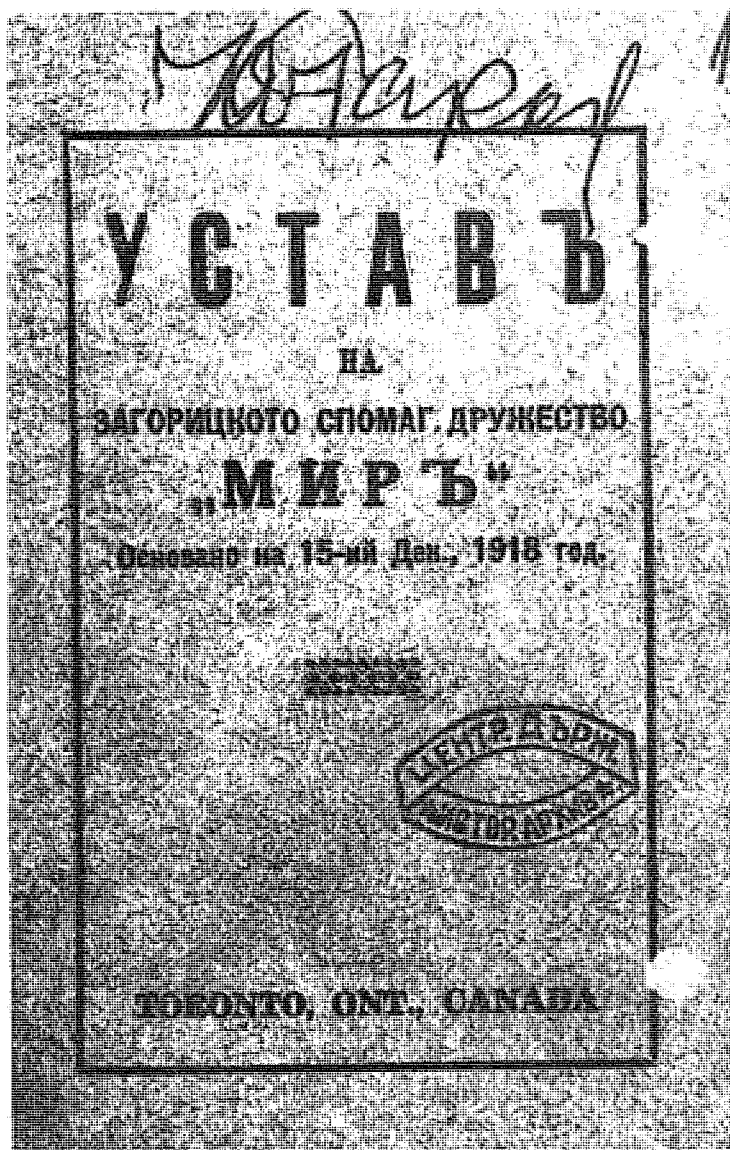


Figure 6- The first page of the statute and bylaws of Zagorichane Mutual Benefit Society Mir [Peace], founded on 15 December, 1918 in Toronto. The text is in literary Bulgarian. (Source: Gurdev, Kostadin. *Bългарската Емиграция в Канада* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada]. Sofia: Marin Drinov Academic Press, 1994, 136).

2

УСТАВЪ

НА

ЗАГОРИЦКОТО СПОМАГАТЕЛНО ДРУЖЕСТВО

„МИРЪ“

В Торонто, Онт., Канада

Ц Е Л Ъ .



Чл. 1. Целта на дружеството е: да спомога морално и материално на своите членове в разни случаи, като: болест и смърт. (Само в Американския континент).

Забележка. Дружеството не помага нми от определената си цел.

Чл. 2. Ако некой от членовете се разболее и нема средства да се лекува, дружеството е длъжно да се погрижи да го постави в некоя болница и отпуска до 50.00 долара.

Забележка. Когато оздравее, членът е длъжен да повърне взетата сума. В случай на смърт, дружеството се грижи за погребението

Figure 7- A photo of the members of Zagorichane Mutual Benefit Society St. Elijah (Sv. Iliya), founded in October, 1907 in Toronto. The placard in the photo with the name of the organization and the year of its foundation is in literary Bulgarian. (Source: Gurdev, Kostadin. *Balgarskata Emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada]. Sofia: Marin Drinov Academic Press, 1994, 132).

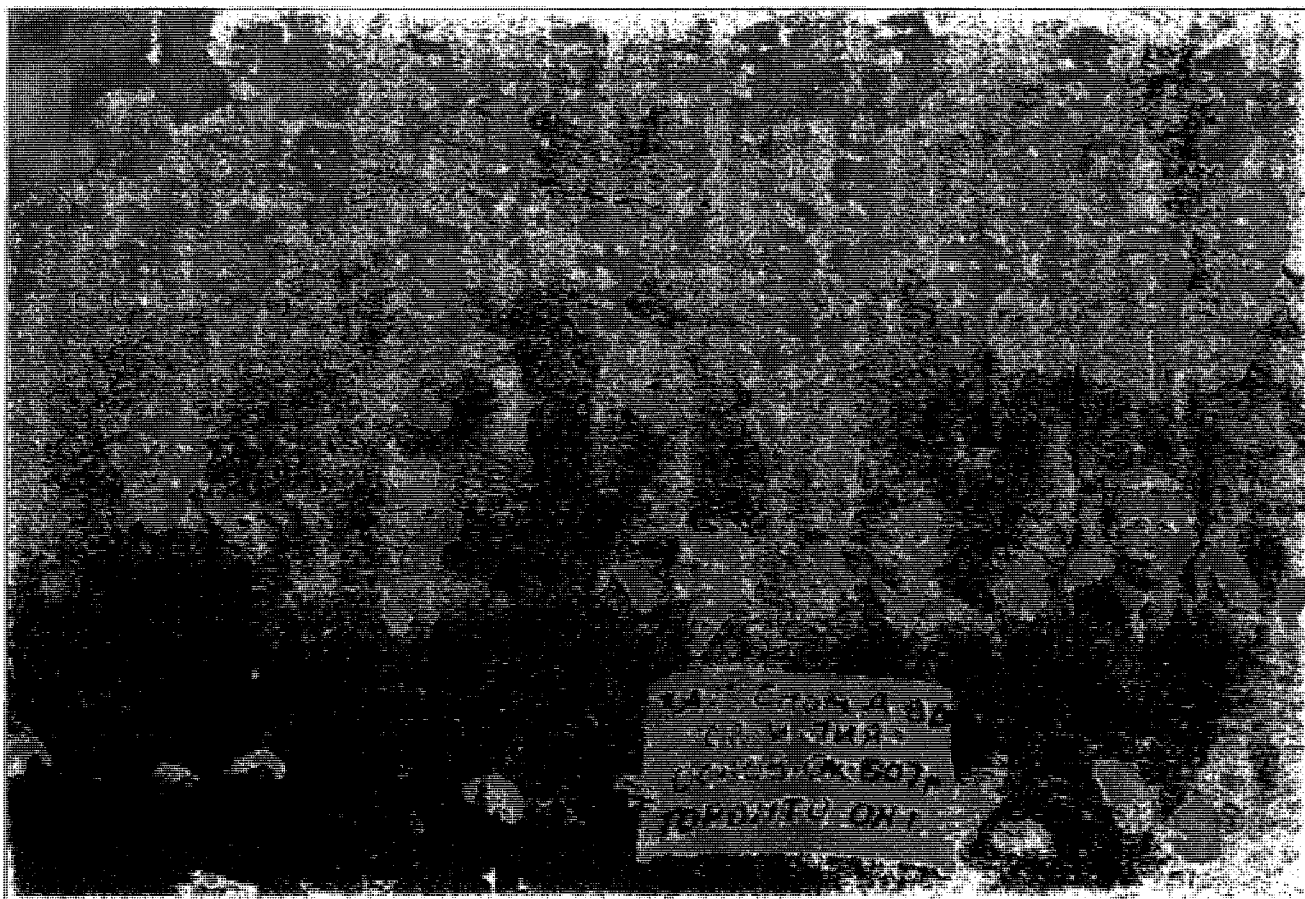


Figure 8- A photo of the members of Zhelevo Mutual Benefit Society, founded in 1907 in Toronto. The motto on the photo is in literary Bulgarian and it reads: “People from Zhelevo, do not forget Zhelevo.” (Source: Canadian Macedonian Historical Society [<http://www.macedonianhistory.ca>]).



The history of the first two Macedono-Bulgarian churches, Sts. Cyril and Methody and St. George is also clouded with FYROM propaganda and distortions of historical facts. Since their founding, both churches have written their documentation only in Bulgarian and English and their current priests, similar to their predecessors, were born in the region of Macedonia and they have a strong Bulgarian ethnic identity.⁷¹

In fact, as early as 1908, Protestants started to preach before Bulgarian Orthodox priests arrived among the Bulgarians from Macedonia. Baptists and Presbyterians were the most successful Protestant churches among the Bulgarian community in Toronto. The Protestant churches realized that the Macedonian immigrants had a Bulgarian ethnic identity and thus, they brought Bulgarian preachers to them. The Baptists counted on Rev. John Kolesnikoff, a Bulgarian Baptist pastor who had experience with preaching to the Macedono-Bulgarian coal miners in Pennsylvania and the two Presbyterian Bulgarian missions in Toronto were under the direction of Rev. Atanasoff and Rev. Katsunoff.⁷² The Macedono-Bulgarians attended evening English classes in these churches but the Protestants never managed to convert a significant number of Bulgarian Canadians. Nevertheless, even after the creation of Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, there was no conflict between the Orthodox and the Protestant parishioners and their clergy. In fact, Dr. Malincheff, a former Orthodox priest, kept excellent relations with Rev. Atanasoff and Rev. Katsunoff and as a physician he even treated Katsunoff's sister.⁷³

⁷¹ Rev. Valeri Shumarov, interviewed by the author, 15 May 2007; Rev. Boris Drangov, interviewed by the author, 10 May, 2007.

⁷² Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 182-3.

⁷³ Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 62.

As a representative of the Bulgarian Holy Synod and a witness to the increasing number of Macedono-Bulgarians, Archimandrite Theophilact brought together the Macedono-Bulgarian immigrants in his church-building campaign. Using persuasion, personal charisma, and a mandate from the Bulgarian Orthodox synod, Theophilact convinced those who were willing to help that fundraising was a critical first step.⁷⁴ The Toronto Sts. Cyril and Methody parish elected its first board of trustees on March 11, 1911 with Kuzo Temelkoff as president and the Reverend Theophilact as priest. The board appointed 20 committee members, nearly all of them between 28 and 35 years of age. In May 1911, the new congregation consecrated a small building at the corner of Trinity and Eastern Avenues that they had purchased the previous year for \$5,000 and converted for its new purpose. According to Protocol 1 of the new church, written in Bulgarian on 11 March 1911, the church delegates were from Zhelevo, Smerdesh, Besvina, Ternava, Tersie, Banitza, Kotori, Grabesh, Gornichevo and other mainly Aegean Macedonian villages.⁷⁵ Donors included immigrants from the Aegean Macedonian cities of Castoria, Florina and the villages around them, as well as the Vardar Macedonian towns of Bitola and Kumanovo. In 1910, according to a church census, there were 514 immigrants from the area around Castoria (Kostur in Bulgarian), 332 from the Lerin (Florina) district, 121 from Prespa and Ohrid (Vardar Macedonia), 42 from Bitola, and 38 from Bulgaria proper.⁷⁶ Thus, the Bulgarians from Macedonia were indeed the dominant group in the Bulgarian community and they decided to wave numerous Bulgarian national flags, as shown on Figure 9, and to bring in a Bulgarian priest. In 1915, they opened a Bulgarian school in the church, which still exists.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ -----50th Anniversary Sts. Cyril and Methody, 8-29.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

Figure 9- A photo of the so-called First Macedonian Church in Canada, Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral, founded in 1910-1911 in Toronto.

(Source: Canadian Macedonian Historical Society [<http://www.macedonianhistory.ca>]).



The Consecration of the Church, corner of Trinity and Eastern Ave. on 24th of May, 1911, by the Russian Archbishop Platon of New York, Hieromonak Theophilact, Russian priest Rev. Kohonik and Archdeacon Vsevohod.

Note: A closer look at the photo reveals at least ten big and small Bulgarian national flags, waved by the church founders – mostly Bulgarians from Aegean Macedonia. The explanation below the picture mentioned the nationality of all Russian church officials,

except the nationality of Theofilact, probably because he was a representative of the Bulgarian Holy Synod.

The strong Bulgarian ethnic identity of the Macedono-Bulgarians led to a rivalry with the newly found Greek Orthodox Church of St. George and its priest Paparaschakis, who claimed that Macedonians were not Bulgarians, but Greeks. This rivalry stopped for a while in 1912, because Greece and Bulgaria were allies in the First Balkan War (1912) against Turkey. However, it started again with the Second Balkan War (1913), when Greece and Bulgaria faced each other on the battlefield.⁷⁸

Regarding the name ‘Macedono-Bulgarian,’ not only the current priests of the three Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox churches in Toronto,⁷⁹ but also the Macedonian Political (Patriotic since 1952) Organization stated in 1960 that: “The majority of these congregations designate themselves as “Macedono-Bulgarian.” This signifies the fact that they are made up chiefly of Bulgarian Macedonians, and that they are accordingly an integral part of the national Bulgarian Orthodox Church.”⁸⁰ Thus, the argument of Vražinovski that the Bulgarians conquered the “initially pure Macedonian churches in Toronto”⁸¹ is not supported by any primary source.

The Sts. Cyril and Methody Church split in the late 1930s led to the founding of the second Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Toronto in 1940-41, St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church. This church continues to serve the Bulgarian Canadian community in Toronto, most of them Bulgarian Canadians from Macedonia and their descendants. Nevertheless, Lillian Petroff argued that the reason for the split was the

⁷⁸ Gurdev, *Bălgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 223; Vassiliadis, *Whose Are You*, 186.

⁷⁹ Rev. Valeri Shumarov, interviewed by the author, 15 May 2007; Rev. Boris Drangov, interviewed by the author, 10 May, 2007; Rev. Krâstan Vukashinov, interviewed by the author, 17 May 2007.

⁸⁰ M.P.O. *Macedonians in North America*, 30.

⁸¹ Vražinovski, *Makedonskoto iseleništvo* [The Macedonian Emigration], 31.

emerging Macedonian ethnicity and the fanatical Bulgarian nationalism of the new Bulgarian Bishop Andrey. In order to demonstrate their alleged dissatisfaction with the Bulgarian control of the church and their Macedonian identity, according to Petroff, in 1940 forty Macedono-Bulgarians threw rotten eggs and tomatoes at the new Bulgarian Bishop Andrey in Toronto.⁸² Furthermore, Petroff explained that “These events led to the foundation of a second community church; the undercurrent behind the split called for Macedonian ethnicism and less emphasis on things Bulgarian, except in matters of language.”⁸³ The misleading account of the turbulent 1930s that Petroff gave would be very compelling if there were no witnesses who actively participated in the split of the church. The question that Petroff never raised was why the new church was called ‘Macedono-Bulgarian’ and not simply ‘Macedonian’ if, indeed, the parishioners wanted to express their “ethnic Macedonian pride.”

In an interview with Irene Markoff, in 1977, Reverend Vasil Mihailoff gave an interesting account of the church split as an eye-witness and the first priest of St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church.⁸⁴ Mihailoff was born in Sofia in 1910 but his parents were refugees from Bitola, Vardar Macedonia. He came to Toronto in 1938 to serve as a priest in Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Church but he quickly joined the group of Macedono-Bulgarian parishioners who were dissatisfied with the new Bulgarian Bishop Andrey, sent to North America in 1934. However, the reason for the conflict had nothing to do with ethnic identities. Mihailoff expressed a strong Bulgarian ethnic identity and he shared with Markoff the position, held by almost all Bulgarians, that Macedonians emerged as an ethnicity after 1944 thanks to Tito. He also confirmed that 99 % of his

⁸² Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 144.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Rev. Vasil Mihailoff interviewed by Irene Markoff, 7 February 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

parishioners were Bulgarians from Macedonia. The issue with Bishop Andrey, however, was that he was perceived as a tool of the new Bulgarian government, which looked for rapprochement with Yugoslavia.⁸⁵ Kostadin Gurdev and Georgi Ivanov, the expert of the history of the Bulgarian churches in North America, confirmed Mihailoff's account.⁸⁶

Andrey Velichki was sent to North America in 1938 by the Holy Synod with the approval of the Bulgarian Prime Minister Georgi Kyoseivanov and his *Zveno* government. *Zveno* [Link] was a political bloc that came into power in 1934 after a military coup and strove for a rapprochement with Yugoslavia. In order to promote Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations, the *Zvenars*, as the members of the new bloc were called, dissolved IMRO, confiscated all their weapons and prohibited Macedono-Bulgarian guerillas from going to Yugoslavia and engaging in assassinations. This development in Bulgaria allowed the Serbian government to continue its assimilation programs against the Bulgarian population in Vardar Macedonia without any protests from the new government and the Macedono-Bulgarian community in Toronto was infuriated. They perceived the new Bulgarian government as a clique of "Serbomans" and traitors. Thus, when Andrey Velichki came to North America, the MPO met him with an article in the *Macedonian Tribune*, entitled: "Kyoseivanov Sends His Agent Andrey Velichki with a Serboman Kiss."⁸⁷ MPO activists ridiculed the new bishop's mace, decorated with a small Bulgarian flag. The bishop responded that he wanted to remind the Bulgarian Canadians that they had Bulgarian roots. Their answer of the MPO members was very revealing: "The Bulgarians from Macedonia in America know better than Andrey Velichki that they are Bulgarians. If they did not feel as

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 237-240; Georgi K. Ivanov, *Po Kanona, Po Zakona i po Oshte Neshto: Dokumentalna Hronika na Bâlgarskata Pravoslavna Cârkva v Severna Amerika* [By the Canon, by the Law and by Something Else: A Documentary Chronicle of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in North America] (Chicago, 1004), paper in author's possession, 13-17.

⁸⁷ Ivanov, *Po Kanona, Po Zakona* [By the Canon, by the Law], 14.

such, they would not organize their powerful union [MPO] in order to fight the Serbian and Greek chauvinism; they would not build their own churches in America with no help; they would not support Bulgarian schools and so forth.”⁸⁸

Vasil Mihailoff pointed out that the conflict, which caused the formal church split, was the refusal of Bishop Andrey in 1939 to allow the celebration of a mass in memory of the IMRO activists Mara Buneva and Vlado Chernozemski. Buneva assassinated the Serbian official Velimir Prelić in 1928 and committed suicide immediately after, whereas Vlado Chernozemski assassinated the Yugoslav king Alexander in 1934 and was executed on the spot by a French officer in Marseille, as was noted in the previous chapter. Such a mass would spoil Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations and thus, the bishop refused with the excuse that he could not celebrate a mass in memory of murderers.⁸⁹ The answer of the Central Committee of the MPO was rather sarcastic: “Does the bishop know how many murderers were canonized as saints?”⁹⁰ Two of the priests at Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Cathedral – Vasil Mihailoff and George Nikoloff – led the protest against Bishop Andrey at the First Church Conference of the Bulgarian Orthodox Churches in the USA and Canada, held on 13-14 February 1939 in Detroit. The dissenting priests and their supporters wanted the Bulgarian Holy Synod to recall Bishop Andrey.⁹¹ The Holy Synod refused and thus, when Bishop Andrey, in November 1940, went to Toronto for a wedding ceremony in Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral, he was verbally assaulted by MPO members and about forty people started to throw rotten tomatoes and eggs at him.⁹² Soon thereafter, Reverend Vasil Mihailoff and Reverend George Nikoloff realized that the

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 15; Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 239.

⁹⁰ Ivanov, *Po Kanona, Po Zakona* [By the Canon, by the Law], 15.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁹² Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 240.

conflict could not be resolved. The parishioners were divided into two groups, supporters of Bishop Andrey and his opponents. To his opponents, the Bishop was a Serboman. The two priests – Mihailoff and Nikoloff – led the dissenters. They bought a building in Toronto that became the second Bulgarian Orthodox church in Toronto in 1941, named St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church.⁹³ In an interview with the author, Reverend Valeri Shumarov, who is the current priest of Sts. Cyril and Methody Cathedral, also confirmed the account of Rev. Mihailoff for the church split and denied any ethnic divisions between Bulgarians and Macedonians.⁹⁴ In fact, most parishioners shared a very strong Bulgarian ethnic identity, were members of the right wing Bulgarian nationalist organization MPO, and an ethnically based conflict among them was impossible.

3.4: Political Organizations

The Bulgarian community in Canada had both right-wing and left-wing organizations, but the right-wing organizations were dominant in Toronto, at least until the Second World War. The most significant organization of the Bulgarian immigrants from Macedonia before the Second World War was the Macedonian Political Organization. In fact, MPO became the most influential Bulgarian organization in North America during the 20th century. It was created on the orders of the IMRO as an overseas IMRO branch, which could lobby for the solution of the Macedonian Question in the League of Nations and with the U.S. Government. After the creation of the League of Nations in 1919, the IMRO leaders Todor Alexandrov and, after his assassination, Ivan Mihailov, sent their emissaries to New

⁹³ Rev. Vasil Mihailoff interviewed by Irene Markoff, 7 February 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

⁹⁴ Rev. Valeri Shumarov, interviewed by the author, 15 May 2007.

York City to organize Bulgarian immigrants in a united movement, which would raise international awareness of the plight of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia. As early as 1919, the Macedono-Bulgarian Central Committee in Chicago sent a *Memorandum, Addressed to the Peace Conference*, which appealed to the Versailles Treaty negotiators to consider the violations of the minority rights of the Bulgarians living in Serbia and Greece.⁹⁵ The New York delegates of IMRO, Jordan Chkatroff and Srebren Petroff, realized that several informal Macedonian councils and organizations, similar to the Macedono-Bulgarian Club in Chicago, had formed in the U.S.A. and Canada since 1919, but they had no formal structure to link and coordinate their efforts. Srebren Petroff visited 30 cities in the U.S.A. and Canada and gave speeches about Macedonia in sixteen of them. After numerous meetings and discussions with the Macedono-Bulgarian diaspora, Srebren Petroff convened a congress of the existing Macedono-Bulgarian clubs in the USA on October 1st, 1922 in Fort Wayne, Indiana.⁹⁶ The By-Laws of the M.P.O. stated that it would not have connections with any political parties or groups but it had to: “Protect the Bulgarian ethnic character of the Macedonian Slav population from all forms of denationalization, and to uphold the truth and honour of Macedonia’s past.”⁹⁷ In order to avoid confusion with its name and aims, at the 30th annual convention held in Toronto in 1952, the MPO members decided to change the name of the organization to Macedonian Patriotic Organization(s).⁹⁸ Their first convention in 1922 adopted the motto: “Macedonia for the Macedonians” and they placed the motto on the masthead of their Bulgarian-language newspaper, *Makedonska Tribuna (Macedonian*

⁹⁵ J.E. Gueshoff and D. Tsokoff, *Memorandum Addressed to the Peace Conference* (Chicago: Macedono-Bulgarian Central Committee, 1919) (MHSO Macedonian Collection).

⁹⁶ Zdravka Micheva, “Formation of the Union of Macedonian Political Organizations in the USA and Canada and Some Aspects of Its Relations with the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization,” *Bulgarian Historical Review*, 21 (4) 1993, 56-9; M.P.O. *Macedonians in North America*, 7-8.

⁹⁷ M.P.O. *Macedonians in North America*, 9.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

Tribune), which was founded in 1927. The MPO, however, did not define Macedonians in ethno-cultural terms. The first of its bylaws, written in 1922 and adopted in its final version in 1927, welcomed all descendants of the Macedonian region, “regardless of nationality, religion, sex, or convictions,” into the MPO.⁹⁹ Only in 1956, when an increasing number of Yugoslav Macedonian immigrants started to use the term ‘Macedonian’ in ethnic terms, did the MPO decide to distinguish itself from the new ethnic Macedonians and the 1956 By-Laws included the following definition: “The terms ‘Macedonians’ and ‘Macedonian immigrants’ used in this by-laws [sic] pertain equally to all nationality groups in Macedonia – Bulgarians, Arumanians, Turks, Albanians and others.”¹⁰⁰

In May 1922, with the assistance of Srebren Petroff, the Macedono-Bulgarians in Toronto formed MPO Pravda [Justice]. John Grudeff proposed the local MPO branch be called ‘Justice’ as an indication that the Bulgarians in Macedonia were looking for justice.¹⁰¹ The Toronto branch organized a women’s auxiliary in 1927, which opened a Bulgarian school at Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Church in 1929, and a youth section was formed in 1934. After the church split in Toronto, the M.P.O. members, who joined Reverend Vasil Mihailoff in the new St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, formed M.P.O. Pobeda [Victory].¹⁰²

The church split in Toronto led to a division of the local MPO branch as well, because the MPO and church were closely linked. The MPO leaders grew out of communities with a strong Bulgarian Orthodox Church parish, and as in Macedonia, where the I.M.R.O. united their efforts with the Bulgarian Exarchate, the MPO became closely

⁹⁹ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 195.

¹⁰⁰ By-Laws of the Macedonian Patriotic Organization of the United States and Canada (M.P.O.: Indianapolis, IN, 1956, (MHSO Macedonian Collection).

¹⁰¹ John Grudeff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 9 February 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

¹⁰² M.P.O. *Macedonians in North America*, 12; Ivanov, *Po Kanona, Po Zakona* [By the Canon, by the Law], 16.

associated with the dominant religious organization in the Bulgarian diaspora. The MPO local branches became, in essence, the political arm of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in North America. Thus, the MPO was a conservative and Bulgarian nationalist right-wing organization, which constantly sent the League of Nations and the U.S. and Western European governments letters, declarations and pamphlets, describing the Serbian and Greek violations of the rights of Bulgarians in Macedonia during the entire inter-war period. Regardless of the active involvement of the MPO members in the formation of Bulgarian schools, picnics, plays and other cultural activities, the major activities of the organization were related to Macedonia.¹⁰³ As an overseas wing of the IMRO, MPO was strongly anti-Serbian and anti-Greek. In a booklet published by MPO in 1936, the IMRO leader Ivan Mihailov, under the alias Balkanicus, justified the IMRO assassinations of Serbian officials with the argument that, while even the Turks had recognized Bulgarian ethnicity in Macedonia until 1912, the Greeks and Serbs tried to uproot everything Bulgarian in Macedonia, closing down Bulgarian schools and churches and changing names of people and places. Since all legal means of protest, including petitions to the international community failed, IMRO resorted to violence to liberate Macedonia, Balkanicus argued.¹⁰⁴ The IMRO leader also explained that IMRO did not resist the new Bulgarian Zveno government after the coup of 19th May, 1934 when the *Zvenars* banned IMRO and confiscated all its weapons, because IMRO “did not want to shed Bulgarian blood and thus, to help the Serbs and all other Bulgarian enemies. The Serbs expected a fratricidal massacre [...], but their expectations were not met.”¹⁰⁵ Despite, this vehement expression of Bulgarian nationalism,

¹⁰³ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 107.

¹⁰⁴ Balkanicus, *Makedonskata Osvoboditelna Borba i Prevrata ot 19 May, 1934 v Bâlgariya* [The Macedonian Liberation Struggle and the Bulgarian Coup of 19th May, 1934] (Indianapolis, IN: Central Committee of the M.P.O. in U.S.A., Canada and Australia, 1936) (MHSO Macedonian Collection), 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

the University of Toronto history professor Andrew Rossos maintained, that as a conductor of Macedonian nationalism, IMRO had a “semi-autonomous Macedonian kingdom in Bulgaria.”¹⁰⁶

In a similar fashion, Lillian Petroff claimed that the Toronto MPO branch was called Pravda, which was supposedly a Macedonian term for “justice.”¹⁰⁷ She did not explain how the Bulgarian John Grudeff invented the “Macedonian” word “pravda” 43 years before the codification of the Macedonian language. In an absolute contradiction of her previous statement, she described an incident in the Bulgarian language school and then noted that: “The MPO spoke proudly of the Bulgarian character of the Slavs of Macedonia in its 1936 almanac.”¹⁰⁸ Then, Petroff confidently concluded that: “The MPO and its Toronto chapter, Pravda, proved powerful expressions of Macedonian identity through the 1920s and 1930s.”¹⁰⁹ The strongly manipulative accounts of Rossos and Petroff might mislead modern academics, but in the 1930s the Serbian Consul in Toronto, A.V. Seferović, was certainly aware of the real Bulgarian nationalist positions of IMRO and its Canadian auxiliary MPO. He demanded that the Canadian authorities suppress the activities of MPO, because it was an ally of the “terrorists of IMRO” who killed peaceful Serbs and Greeks in Europe. The RCMP, however, considered MPO as an almost religious society, apparently anti-Serbian, but not as dangerous as the pro-Communist organizations. The only demand of the Canadian authorities was that MPO Pravda should record its proceedings in English to be better monitored. This demand did not intimidate the MPO members in Toronto. In their annual convention almanac of 1936, the Macedono-Bulgarian activists of Pravda maintained that

¹⁰⁶ Andrew Rossos, “The British Foreign Office and Macedonian National Identity, 1918-1941,” *Slavic Review*, 53 (2), Summer, 1994, 374.

¹⁰⁷ Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers*, 138.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

Macedono-Bulgarians, living in Canada should be loyal to their adopted country and besides in each parade the flags of Bulgaria and the Union Jack were always next to each other.¹¹⁰

The MPO members were virtually all parishioners of Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Cathedral and thus, they considered the Patriarchists, who went to the Greek Orthodox Church St. George, Grkomans, i.e. traitors. In the interwar period, there were also cases in which members of the same family were divided along ethnic lines into Bulgarians and Greeks, even if such cases were fewer when compared to the post-WWII period. A Slavic Macedonian restaurateur with a Greek ethnic identity, i.e. a Patriarchist, noted: "I went to that church [Sts. Cyril and Methody] because my uncle and aunt, they belong to that and when she died I had to go in it for the funeral."¹¹¹ Despite the ethnic rift, Bulgarians and Greek Slavophones from Macedonia lived side by side in the Niagara Street area of Toronto and accepted the presence of the other group, even though they were divided into two separate ethnic communities.¹¹²

MPO did not consider the Patriarchists as their biggest rivals, but they worried much more about the pro-communist organizations, which tried to divide the Bulgarian community in the 1930s. Until the 1930s, the right-wing orientation and Bulgarian nationalism of the MPO was virtually unchallenged, as well as the authority of the Bulgarian Holy Synod among the Macedono-Bulgarian immigrants. In the late 1920s, the first challenge for the leadership of the community came from the Macedono-Bulgarian Progressive Club Christo Botev. The club was founded in April 1926 and named after the greatest Bulgarian 19th century revolutionary poet Christo Botev. The aim of its 36 initial members was to unite the left-wing Bulgarian immigrants in Toronto. In 1928, the communist members of Christo

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 161-2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 112-13.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 112.

Botev protested against the measures of the Serbian government that led to prison terms for many Bulgarians in Vardar Macedonia. Following the directives of the Comintern, they declared that the Macedonian Question should be solved with the creation of a Balkan Federation of Soviet Republics.¹¹³ The communist club decided to challenge, as well, the authority of the church and, in 1934, it created a “free Bulgarian school,” i.e. independent from the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and MPO with Dincho Ralley as its teacher.¹¹⁴ The activities of the Christo Botev Club infuriated both the Bulgarian priests in Toronto and the MPO branch Justice, because both the priests and the MPO leaders were vehemently anti-communist and they wanted to be the only representatives of the Bulgarian Canadian community in Toronto. Nevertheless, the leaders of the communist organization, such as Dincho Ralley and George Douloff, did not dispute the Bulgarian ethnic identity of the Macedonian immigrants and they continued to declare a Bulgarian ethnic identity after the Second World War.¹¹⁵

The real assault against the MPO and its Bulgarian nationalism, however, came in the 1930s by George Pirinsky, who attempted to promote for the first time a genuine Macedonian ethnic identity in America, following the new directives of the Comintern. George Pirinsky arrived in New York City on August 1, 1923. Born in the town of Bansko, a small Bulgarian town in Pirin Macedonia, Pirinsky declared himself to be “Macedonian by race and Yugoslav by nationality.”¹¹⁶ Later, in 1951, when he was expelled from the USA, Pirinsky would declare again a Bulgarian nationality and he would return to Bulgaria to join

¹¹³ Dincho Ralley, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 26 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Dincho Ralley, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 26 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection); George Douloff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 14 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

¹¹⁶ Ivan Gadjev, *Istoriya na Bâlgarskata Emigraciya v Severna Amerika: Bâlgariya, Mashteha Nasha (1944-1989)*, Vol. II [History of the Bulgarian Emigration to North America: Bulgaria: Our Stepmother (1944-1989), Vol. 2] (Goce Delchev: Institute for the History of the Bulgarian Emigration to North America “Iliya Todorov Gadjev,” 2006), 391.

the Bulgarian Communist Party and its administration. But in the 1930s, he had to follow the orders of the Comintern for promoting of a separate Macedonian ethnicity and gaining support for the new cause and the Bolshevik ideology among the Bulgarian immigrants from Macedonia. Thus, in 1930, George Pirinsky organized the Macedonian Progressive Group Vardar and in 1931, the group participated in the formation of the Macedonian People's League (M.P.L.).¹¹⁷ Article 1 of the M.P.L. Constitution stated: "The M.P.L. aims to help, with all its efforts, the liberation and unification of Macedonia in an independent People's Republic and its joining as an equal member of the future Balkan federation of the freed Balkan nations."¹¹⁸ Pirinsky became the M.P.L.'s first and only national secretary, a title he held until 1949. The organization expressed its views, essentially Pirinsky's views, in a pro-communist newspaper published in Bulgarian, in Detroit, Michigan, *Narodna Volya* (the *People's Will*). The newspaper was also distributed in Canada and it attacked both IMRO and its auxiliary in North America, the MPO, calling them "terrorists" and "Bulgarian nationalists and fascists."¹¹⁹ The M.P.L. chapter in Toronto, Vardar, directly attacked the local MPO chapter Justice and claimed that the M.P.L. and its communist supporters were "the only true voice of the sentiments and desires of the Macedonian immigration in the U.S.A. and Canada."¹²⁰ MPO Justice and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church considered such statements as discrediting the Bulgarian ethnic community and in June of 1932, MPO declared publicly in Toronto that only the members of MPO Justice and the parishioners of Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral represented the Macedono-Bulgarian immigration in Toronto, and the Canadian authorities should deal only with these

¹¹⁷ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 168-9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.

institutions. Any other group was illegitimate, according to the MPO members.¹²¹ They also claimed that Pirinsky was not a progressive idealist but rather a paid communist agent working with other left-wing immigrants to confuse Slavic populations. The MPO members also revealed the contacts that Pirinsky had with the Bulgarian, Soviet and Yugoslav Communist parties.¹²²

The M.P.L. chapter in Toronto could not muster more than 200 members and the M.P.L. never had more than 500 members in North America. Thus, the communists could not achieve the influence that MPO and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church had among the majority of the Macedono-Bulgarian immigrants during the inter-war period. Furthermore, both the Canadian and U.S. Governments supported the right-wing organizations and were hostile to pro-communist groups. On July 4, 1940 the Canadian authorities banned the pro-communist Toronto newspaper *Edinstvo* [Unity], which was published in Bulgarian by the Macedono-Bulgarian Progressive Club Christo Botev.¹²³

George Pirinsky and his supporters could not reach their goal of gaining wide support among the Macedono-Bulgarian immigrants in North America. Nevertheless, it was the first genuine attempt at the proclamation of a Macedonian ethnic identity in North America, as well as the first serious attempt of the Comintern to gain influence among ethnic communities overseas. Despite all speculations by Lillian Petroff, Peter Vassiliadis, Tanas Vražinovski and Slave Nikolovski-Katin,¹²⁴ who argued that in the inter-war period there was a vibrant ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto, all primary sources and oral

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹²² Gadjev, *Istoriya na Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [History of the Bulgarian Immigration], 385-400.

¹²³ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 189; Dincho Ralley, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 26 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

¹²⁴ Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers*; Vassiliadis, *Whose Are You?*; Vražinovski, *Makedonskoto iseleništvo* [The Macedonian Emigration]; Nikolovski-Katin, *Makedonski Iselenički Panoptikum* [Macedonian Immigrants' Panopticon].

interviews indicated only the existence of strong Bulgarian and Greek ethnic communities with their churches, schools and cultural organizations and activities. Only in the 1930s, did pro-communist emissaries try to establish a genuine ethnic Macedonian community but their attempts failed due to the resistance by the old generations of immigrants led by the MPO and the Bulgarian Orthodox priests, who had a very strong Bulgarian ethnic identity.

3.5: The So-Called Macedonian Collection of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHOS)

All primary sources confirmed the Bulgarian ethnic identity of the Slavic immigrants from Macedonia with a minority of Slavophone Greeks during the period 1900-1940. The Macedono-Bulgarian churches served the community in Bulgarian and the parishioners founded Bulgarian schools and cultural and mutual benefit societies and newspapers, which kept their records in Bulgarian. Many documents, as well as oral interviews with early immigrants and leaders of the Macedono-Bulgarian community have been preserved, but they contradicted the post-war Skopje historiography, which claimed that the Macedonian ethnicity and language were 4,000 years old. Thus, all immigrants who came to Canada and the USA since the beginning of the last century were supposed to have a strong Macedonian ethnic identity. A number of historians made similar attempts to distort the historical facts and the history of the Bulgarian ethnic community in Toronto and to present it as an ethnic Macedonian community, which even wrote in Macedonian decades before its codification. A cohort of Macedonian historians have forged and manipulated numerous historical documents in Yugoslavia and later the FYROM but one might think that a similar approach

in Canada would not be tolerated and it would be virtually impossible. In fact, most historical researchers in Canada and internationally continue to consider the Canadian archives as a reliable source of information. The Canadian archivists have no reason to forge or manipulate documents and especially documents related to a small ethnic community that has usually kept a low profile. However, unknown ethnic Macedonian propagandists in Toronto decided to literally produce a whole collection of 'primary Macedonian historical documents' related to the non-existent ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto before the Second World War, and to include the manipulated sources into a Macedonian historical collection.

A perfect target for the falsification scheme became the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO), which is an educational not-for-profit organization, established in 1976 by Professor Robert Harney and affiliated with the University of Toronto. One of the aims of MHSO is to collect materials related to the various ethnic communities in Ontario and to preserve them in the MHSO archives and museum.¹²⁵

A further enquiry into the matter could reveal who built, archived and described the Macedonian and Bulgarian historical collections of the MHSO as well as the time, when it was done. The unknown archivists, following the Socialist Macedonian approach to historical records, placed into the MHSO Macedonian Collection hundreds of important primary documents related to the Bulgarian ethnic community in Toronto, as well as one Greek Canadian document. Furthermore, tens of document titles were incorrectly translated into English and described as Macedonian, when they were in fact written in Bulgarian, which is an outright falsification of archival sources. Since the list of misplaced and falsified sources is quite long, only a selected list will be presented in this thesis.

¹²⁵ Multicultural History Society Of Ontario. *Who We Are* [<http://www.mhso.ca/about.html>].

Documents and interviews, related to the same person, were placed in two different collections – Macedonian and Bulgarian. John Grudeff's interview with Irene Markoff, in which he spoke in detail about his biography and he openly expressed his Bulgarian national identity and place of birth in the Bulgarian village of Gramatikovo, away from Macedonia, as well as his view of the Macedonian nation as a Communist invention, was placed into the MHSO Bulgarian Collection.¹²⁶ Grudeff's scrapbook, however, which contains correspondence (1913-1964), an unpublished manuscript and different newspaper clippings and photographs, was included in the MHSO Macedonian Collection.¹²⁷ The scrapbook was a much more acceptable source for the Macedonian Collection than Grudeff's interview, because in the attached documents Grudeff was silent regarding the Macedonian nation and yet, his personal correspondence and memories should be in the Bulgarian collection. Seven books and pamphlets in Bulgarian, most of them printed in Sofia, were placed in the MHSO Macedonian collection with the description: "A selection of Bulgarian-language books. Granite City, Illinois, 1894-1920, from Naroden Glas Bulgarian bookstore."¹²⁸ These books were followed by the almanac of the Bulgarian ethnic newspaper *Naroden Glas* [People's Voice] with the following summary: "*Naroden Glas: Jubilee Almanac, 1908-1933*. Granite City, Illinois: Naroden Glas Publishing, 1933, in Bulgarian."¹²⁹ The *First Bulgarian-English Pocket Dictionary* by D.G. Malincheff (Toronto, 1913), and Hristo Nedelkov's *Bulgarian and Bulgarian-English Phrasebook* (Granite City, IL, 1911) were also included in the MHSO Macedonian Collection but they were also correctly archived without changes to their

¹²⁶ John Grudeff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 9 February 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

¹²⁷ Nick G. Forte, *A Guide to the Collections of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario*. (Toronto: MHSO, 1992), 339.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 339.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 339.

original titles.¹³⁰ A subsection in the MHSO Macedonian Collection was dedicated to tens of MPO documents, books and pamphlets, written in English and Bulgarian.¹³¹ All MPO documents were written by fervent Bulgarian nationalists, who denied the existence of any Macedonian ethnicity or Macedonian language and thus, their presence in the MHSO Macedonian Collection is a real enigma. Even the titles of some of the MPO publications are quite revealing: *The Plight of the Bulgarians under the Rule of Serbs and Greeks from 1912 up to the Present Day*,¹³² *DISCLOSURE: On the Situation of the Bulgarians in Greek Macedonia*,¹³³ *In Defense of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Macedonia*,¹³⁴ and *The Macedonian Bulgarians: By the Testimony of Enver-Bey (Pasha) Turkish National Hero*.¹³⁵ *The Truth about Macedonia: American Missionaries' Testimony* is another MPO pamphlet that published the accounts of American Protestant missionaries in Macedonia regarding the Bulgarian ethnicity and language of the population and the pressure on them by the Serbian and Greek authorities in the interwar period not to preach in Bulgarian.¹³⁶ The MPO declaration *A Pilgrimage to the Grave of St. Cyril in Rome in the Name of a Planned National-Cultural GENOCIDE* accused the Yugoslav Macedonian authorities of conducting a cultural and national genocide of the Bulgarian culture and ethnicity in Macedonia.¹³⁷

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 340.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 342.

¹³² -----, *The Plight of the Bulgarians under the Rule of Serbs and Greeks from 1912 up to the Present Day* (Indianapolis: MPO, n.d.) MHSO Macedonian Collection.

¹³³ -----, *DISCLOSURE: On the Situation of the Bulgarians in Greek Macedonia* (Indianapolis: MPO, 1960) MHSO Macedonian Collection.

¹³⁴ -----, *In Defense of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church of Macedonia* (A Declaration submitted to the clergy of the Macedono-Bulgarian churches in the U.S. and Canada to the 38th Macedonian Patriotic Organization (MPO) convention of the U.S. and Canada, held in Chicago, Il and unanimously adopted by the M.P.O. Delegates on September 8, 1959), MHSO Macedonian Collection.

¹³⁵ Christ Anastasoff, ed. and translator, *The Macedonian Bulgarians. By the Testimony of Enver-Bey (Pasha) Turkish National Hero* (Indianapolis: MPO, 1972) MHSO Macedonian Collection.

¹³⁶ -----, *The Truth about Macedonia: American Missionaries' Testimony* (Indianapolis: MPO, 1964) (MHSO: Macedonian Collection).

¹³⁷ -----, *A Pilgrimage to the Grave of St. Cyril in Rome in the Name of a Planned National-Cultural GENOCIDE* (Indianapolis: MPO, 1970) MHSO Macedonian Collection.

Nevertheless, all these sources, abundant with Bulgarian nationalism were included in the MHSO Macedonian Collection merely because they were published by an organization which included in its name 'Macedonian.' The Macedonian Patriotic Organization, however, formed in 1922, became the strongest Bulgarian nationalist organization in North America. The term 'Macedonian' does not always refer to a Macedonian nation, similar to the term 'American,' which could refer to the U.S. as a nation but it could also have a purely geographic connotation.

The blunt falsifications of archival sources, however, were much more outrageous than the mere misplacement of documents. A paper with the proceedings of the 32nd National Convention of the Pan-Macedonian Association in Toronto of July 4th-9th 1978, written in English and Greek was listed in the MHSO Macedonian collection as: "written in English and Macedonian."¹³⁸ Regardless of the name Pan-Macedonian, this association is a fervent Hellenic nationalist organization and Jim Karas, the President of the Toronto chapter of the Pan-Macedonian Association confirmed in an interview with the thesis author that this is a Greek organization, which supports the traditional Greek position on the Macedonian issue.¹³⁹ In fact, this organization is the main rival of all ethnic Macedonians in Toronto and most conflicts between the Greek and the Macedonian ethnic communities usually involve members of *Pan-Makedoniki*, as the Hellenic Canadians call their organization in Greek. Jim Karas also stated that all proceedings and published documents of the Pan-Macedonian Association are conducted in English and Greek.¹⁴⁰ The inclusion of this document, as well as information about Greek War veterans, members of the Royal Canadian Legion in the MHSO Macedonian collection is misleading and incorrect but the listing of a Greek language

¹³⁸ Forte, *A Guide to the Collections*, 342.

¹³⁹ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

document as a document written in Macedonian is worse, it is a blatant falsification. A.C. Yovcheff's *Bulgaro-Amerikanski Pismovnik* [Bulgarian-American Writing Guide] (Chicago, 1917) was listed in the MHSO guide, as well as on the cover of the microfilm with the manuscript as: "Youcheff [sic], A. *Macedonian-Bulgarian Phrase Book and Letter Writer*. Chicago, 1917. In English/Macedonian. 1 reel microfilm."¹⁴¹ There only two correct facts in this description: the place and year of publication. Even the name of the author was misspelled to Youcheff, instead of Yovcheff. Ironically, the microfilm cover informed the users that: "this microfilm accurately represents the quality of the original from which it is reproduced."¹⁴² The microfilm also included the note that: "This microfilm has been prepared from manuscript by Mrs. Lillian Petroff of Toronto."¹⁴³ Dr. Lillian Petroff is the same historian who wrote the first book on the Macedonian community in Toronto- *Sojourners and Settlers: The Macedonian Community in Toronto to 1940*.¹⁴⁴ It is difficult to determine whether she was solely responsible for this forgery but she is definitely aware of these falsifications in her role as president of MHSO and coordinator of the Macedonian Collection and the MHSO Educational Programs. Petroff cannot speak Bulgarian/Macedonian but she demonstrated excellent reading knowledge of Bulgarian in her famous book and it can be assumed that she knows that it is impossible to translate correctly *Bulgaro-Amerikanski* into *Macedonian-Bulgarian*. Secondly, the Bulgarian immigrants needed a guide to formal writing in the English language and it would make no sense for Yovcheff to write a Macedonian-Bulgarian writing guide, in case Petroff forgot the date of codification of the Macedonian language, which was 1944. The by-laws and financial

¹⁴¹ Forte, *A Guide to the Collections*, 340.

¹⁴² Yovcheff, A.C. *Bulgaro-Amerikanski Pismovnik* [Bulgarian-American Writing Guide]. Chicago, n.d. 1917 [microfilm] MHSO Macedonian Collection.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Petroff, *Sojourners and Settlers*.

records of the Banitza Benevolent Society Toronto, 1910-1949¹⁴⁵ and the Constitution of the Zagorichane Democratic Benevolent Federation “Dimitar Blagoev,” 1947¹⁴⁶ were also written in Bulgarian and the language was confirmed to be Bulgarian to the thesis author by the Ontario certified English-Bulgarian/Bulgarian-English Translator Eva Georgiev.¹⁴⁷ Yet, both microfilms were described as written in Macedonian and they were included in the Macedonian collection.

Another blatant misrepresentation of an important Bulgarian Canadian source is the *Almanac*, published in English and Bulgarian, for the 25th Anniversary of the new building of Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Cathedral. This church, which has been a Bulgarian church since its founding in 1911, has published all its records in Bulgarian and English. The current priest of Sts. Cyril and Methody, Rev. Valeri Shumarov, also denied that his church has ever published any document in Macedonian. He said: “As a Bulgarian church, in fact the first Bulgarian church in Toronto, we have always published our records, almanacs, calendars and so on in Bulgarian and for the younger generations in English.”¹⁴⁸ The *25 Years of Sts. Cyril and Methody Parish, 1934-1959 Almanac*, however, was included in the MHSO Macedonian collection and it was diligently described in the MHSO guide as written in “English/Macedonian.”¹⁴⁹

The list can be continued with more falsified and misplaced sources and yet the examples above are sufficient to characterize the so-called Macedonian Collection of the MHSO. In fact, this collection contains even some genuinely Macedonian sources, such as documents produced by the Macedonian Canadian Senior Citizen’s Club, St. Clement of

¹⁴⁵ Banitza Benevolent Society Toronto, 1910-1949. [microfilm] MHSO Macedonian Collection.

¹⁴⁶ Constitution of the Zagorichane Democratic Benevolent Federation “Dimitar Blagoev”, 1947 [microfilm] MHSO Macedonian Collection.

¹⁴⁷ Eva Georgiev, interviewed by the author, 18 May 2007.

¹⁴⁸ Rev. Valeri Shumarov, interviewed by the author, 15 May 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Forte, *A Guide to the Collections*, 340.

Ohrid-First Macedonian Orthodox Church, Toronto and St. Naum Macedonian Orthodox Church in Hamilton records.¹⁵⁰ Yet the sources written in Macedonian and genuinely related to the ethnic Macedonian community comprise a small part of the MHSO Macedonian Collection, no more than 20 %. That is so, because the Macedonian ethnic community in Canada does not have a long history, since it was formed only after the Second World War, following the emerging of the Macedonian nation in Yugoslavia.

One may ask two questions: what was the motivation for the falsification and misplacement of such a large collection of historical documents? Secondly, what should be done now, when the manipulation is revealed? The major goal of the ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto is to prove to the Canadian public that they existed as a nation and ethnic community in Toronto since the beginning of the 20th century. Furthermore, it would not look good to argue that they have 4,000 years of history and literature in Europe and yet, here in Canada, they did not exist before the Second World War, because their predecessors spoke Bulgarian and they had a Bulgarian national identity. Similar to the FYROM historians in the Balkans, the ethnic Macedonians in Toronto quickly encountered the issue of numerous historical documents which did not support their argument and thus, they decided to act accordingly, i.e. to falsify the historical documents until they become acceptable for the Macedonian community. Such a collection of documents brings not only ethnic pride to the ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto but also provides future researchers of the Macedonian community in Toronto with sources, on the basis of which they can make conclusions about the “long” history of this ethnic community. Such conclusions would be incorrect, because they would be based on misleading evidence. The narrow nationalist aims of the ethnic Macedonians in Toronto are apparently used to create a new history. However,

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 342-3.

such a history should be based on historical facts and not on falsifications and cheap propaganda. These manipulations and falsifications of primary sources must be corrected in order to prevent the misleading of scholars and the degradation of the good reputation of the MHSO and the University of Toronto. The solution could be either merging of the Macedonian and Bulgarian collections into one or the Bulgarian and Greek documents could be moved to their respective ethnic collections to which they belong. In both cases, all forged Bulgarian and Greek documents must be archived again by new archivists, who should translate correctly the document titles and they also should summarize accurately the contents of all documents as written in English/Bulgarian or English/Greek.

CHAPTER 4

MACEDONIAN IMMIGRATION TO TORONTO, 1940-1996

4.1: Post-WWII Immigration to Canada

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Canadian government was very attached to the British Empire and British national symbols and laws. After the Second World War, however, Canadians gained more confidence and pride in Canada. They wanted the rest of the world and the new immigrants coming to Canada to see a distinct nation with its own identity and symbols. Thus, the Canadian Parliament approved of the first Canadian Citizenship Act in 1946, which came into force on January 1st 1947.¹ Addressing demands for a more liberal immigration policy, Prime Minister Mackenzie King declared that his government intended to increase the Canadian population with new immigrants according to the “absorptive capacity of the Canadian economy.”² The Canadian authorities started to accept sponsored and non-sponsored displaced persons and refugees and between June 1947 and October 1948 50,000 displaced persons from Europe entered Canada.³ The Canadian immigration regulations, however, continued to restrict Asian immigration to Canada and gave priority to Europeans. This policy was continued with the new 1952 Immigration Act. As a result, only 575 Palestinians came to Canada in 1955-56, whereas almost 40,000 Hungarian refugees entered the country in 1957.⁴ Nevertheless, the Canadian government gradually removed its ethnic and racial restrictions and in 1962, thanks to Minister of Immigration Ellen Fairclough, Canada abolished its racist immigration policy with some

¹ Canadian Citizenship Act 1947.

² Valerie Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1997* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1997), 131.

³ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 138-9.

amendments of the immigration law, which would put more weight on the qualifications and the linguistic abilities of potential immigrants. In 1967, another revolutionary amendment of the immigration law implemented the points system as the basis for the selection of new immigrants. The new points system emphasized the applicants' education and qualifications, and also their level of knowledge of English and French. The new immigration law also classified the applicants for immigration into three main categories: skilled workers, family category and refugees.⁵ Responding to the new reality, the Canadian federal government introduced the new Canadian Citizenship Act in 1977.⁶ It removed the last remnants of discrimination of citizenship applicants, providing equal conditions of qualifying for citizenship for all foreign citizens and thus it cancelled all advantages of British subjects. It also included other liberal provisions, such as the residence period for citizenship from five to three years and also the permission of dual citizenship.⁷

These revolutionary changes in Canadian immigration law brought a new influx of immigrants to Canada in the second half of the 20th century. In 1957 Canada received the highest number of immigrants since 1913, 182,164. Due to economic problems, however, the number of immigrants to Canada dropped to 106,928 in 1959-60, 86,313 immigrants in 1978 and to 84, 302 immigrants in 1985. Despite these occasional declines in the number of admitted immigrants, the Canadian government managed to admit to the country on average 150,000 immigrants per year during the Cold War. This number increased to 225,000-275,000 annually during the 1990s.⁸

⁵ Valerie Knowles, *Forging Our Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900-1977* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2000), 81-4.

⁶ Canadian Citizenship Act 1977.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 84-97.

⁸ Knowles, *Strangers at Our Gates*, 143, 206.

During the Cold War Great Britain and the rest of Western Europe gradually improved their standard of living and the number of people willing to immigrate to Canada or elsewhere started to decrease by the 1960s. On the other hand, excluding Baltic, Hungarian, Czech and Slovak refugees, who managed to flee to the West, the Iron Curtain prevented most other Eastern Europeans from immigrating. Thus, the new immigration non-racist merit criteria, combined with the situation in Europe, brought to Canada a very diverse influx of immigrants after the 1960s. Most of them came from Asia and the rest of the developing world with a wide range of skills and occupations. In contrast to the previous waves of immigrants, the new arrivals preferred urban areas and avoided settling in rural Canada.⁹

4.2: Migration and Macedonian Identity in Toronto, 1940-1996

The period 1940-1996 was a very turbulent time that included the Second World War, the Cold War and the Fall of the Berlin Wall, as well as the creation of Macedonia as one of the Yugoslav Republics and finally, Macedonian independence. During this period, the Macedonian identities crystallized in their present form. They included not only the regional Macedono-Bulgarian and Hellenic Macedonian identities but also the new ethnic Macedonian identity, which started to emerge in the 1940s and gained momentum in the 1960s with the first mass influx to Toronto of Macedonian immigrants from Yugoslavia. Immigration from Greece, including Aegean Macedonia, also increased after the Second World War, whereas the immigration from Bulgaria was almost nonexistent, due to the strict border control of communist Bulgaria. While Tito opened the Yugoslav gates in the 1960s, in

⁹ *Ibid.*, 143-5.

the period 1965-1974, only a single Bulgarian citizen managed to reach Canada and ten Bulgarians went to the United States.¹⁰

The three ethnic communities in Toronto experienced various conflicts, which involved not only virtual battles and sometimes street clashes with their rivals, but they also had to deal with tremendous rifts within their own ranks. The Greek immigrants were divided into southern and northern Greeks,¹¹ the Bulgarians into communists and anti-communists. Similarly, some ethnic Macedonians wanted complete independence, while others formed a pro-communist (Titoist) faction, which promoted Macedonian identity within Yugoslavia.¹² These diametrically opposed views on the ethnic community and its relations with the outer world led to another Orthodox church rift in the Bulgarian community, as well as old generation/new generation conflicts in all the three Balkan ethnic communities. These internal conflicts deserve as much attention as the interethnic conflict on Macedonia and Macedonian ethnic identity.

During the research for this thesis, the author noticed that the inter-ethnic rivalries, as well as the ethnocultural organizations and churches in all the three communities, are supported by a very small faction of active community members. This is particularly valid for the Bulgarian community in Toronto, whose members are very passive and apolitical. One of the prominent leaders of the Bulgarian community, George Mladenov, born in Pirin Macedonia, commented that the recent immigrants, who came in the 1990s, did not want to get involved in any Bulgarian Canadian organization and most members of the church boards and the local MPO chapter continue to be older generation immigrants.¹³

¹⁰ John, Georgeoff, "Ethnic Minorities in the People's Republic of Macedonia," In Klein, George and Milan J. Reban, eds. *The Politics of Ethnicity in Eastern Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 77.

¹¹ Vicky Smiaris, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

¹² Pando Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

¹³ George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007.

Meanwhile, the Yugoslav, Greek and Bulgarian governments and their security services were very interested in their ethnic communities. Oftentimes, they attempted to influence various community members and their cultural organizations and churches. They paid significant attention to the “Macedonian Question” and all organizations and people, who were interested in the issue. After the end of the Cold War, the new FYROM and Bulgarian post-communist governments loosened their grip on their ethnic communities due to numerous economic and political challenges which they had at home. The Greek government, however, remained vigilant against pro-Macedonian and anti-Greek activities in Canada. Furthermore, the Greek government continues to prepare blacklists of Canadian and other foreign citizens, who declare a Macedonian ethnic identity abroad. The Greek authorities deny entry to their country to such people. In fact, the governor of the Prefecture of Florina, Greece, publicly acknowledged the existence of the blacklists on July 23rd 2003.¹⁴ Rev. Boris Drangov, a priest at St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Toronto also noted that a couple of his parishioners, ethnic Bulgarians, born in Aegean Macedonia, were questioned by the Greek police during a visit to their native village regarding the Orthodox church they attended in Toronto.¹⁵ Thus, the interethnic conflict over the Macedonian identity in Toronto is multidimensional. It will be demonstrated that the basis of this conflict is the desire of all three communities to monopolize the use and the interpretation of the terms “Macedonia” and “Macedonian,” as well as the mutual denial that regional Macedonian and ethnic Macedonian identities can co-exist peacefully and simultaneously. The involvement of Balkan governments in their financing, propaganda and

¹⁴ *The Macedonian Minority in Greece: Report by the Macedonian Human Rights Movement of Canada 2003* (www.mhrmc.ca/reports/03/osce_greece.html).

¹⁵ Rev. Boris Drangov, interviewed by the author, 10 May, 2007.

sometimes intimidation and pressure on the immigrants, additionally complicated the situation.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that not all members of the three ethnic communities live as irreconcilable rivals. The Bulgarian and Greek communities in Toronto have very good relations, probably because Greek businessmen hire many Bulgarian immigrants. Both communities deny the existence of an ethnic Macedonian identity, not only in the past, but also in the present. It was rather surprising for the author, however, to discover that Jim Karas remained a lifelong friend of Tely Moriovche in Toronto. Jim Karas is a Hellenic Macedonian and a Slavophone from Aegean Macedonia, an active member and president of the most Greek nationalist organization in Toronto, the Pan-Macedonian Association. Tely Moriovche, born in the same village as Jim Karas, near Florina, Greece was the president of the United Macedonians Organization of Canada (1976-1977) and continues to be an active member of the most nationalist and anti-Greek organization of the ethnic Macedonians in Canada. Nevertheless, Karas shared that: "He [Moriovche] is a gentleman and I cannot say anything bad about him."¹⁶ Tely Moriovche even invited Jim Karas to his daughter's wedding.¹⁷ As this example illustrated, a good friendship based on mutual respect is possible between Hellenic and ethnic Macedonians. However, among active members of both communities such cordial relations are more an exception than a rule. Hence, the irreconcilable positions of the Hellenic and Bulgarian communities on the one side, and the ethnic Macedonian communities on the other side, regarding Macedonia, its history, culture, ethnicity and language have resulted in clashes in Toronto numerous times in the last 60 years and the heated Macedonian debate continues.

¹⁶ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

4.3: Macedono-Bulgarians

During the Second World War, the most influential institutions among the Macedono-Bulgarians continued to be the Macedonian Political Organization (MPO) and its Toronto branch Justice, as well as the two Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Churches – Sts. Cyril and Methody and St. George. The enthusiastic support by the MPO of the Bulgarian army, which occupied Greek Aegean Macedonia and the Yugoslav Vardar Macedonia again revealed the Bulgarian nationalist orientation of the MPO members. The MPO position, however, prompted the RCMP and the Canadian Government to consider the MPO members as enemy aliens. In order to prevent persecutions during the war, on April 14, 1942 the MPO Justice Chapter in Toronto arranged an agreement among its members, the youth organization and the ladies auxiliary, to discontinue their political activities until the end of the war. It was also decided that the youth organization and the ladies auxiliary should join the Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church to prevent any suspicions of enemy propaganda by the Canadian government. A five member committee was elected to determine the appropriate time for reviving of the pre-war activities of the MPO.¹⁸ Thus, unfavourable political conditions suppressed any open expression of a Bulgarian national identity during the war.

After 1945, the Cold War initiated a new period among the Bulgarian immigrants to Canada. During this period (1945-1989), Bulgarian immigration to Canada was almost non-existent. Due to the well-guarded frontiers behind the Iron Curtain, in the period 1945-1965,

¹⁸ Peter Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?: Identity and Ethnicity Among the Toronto Macedonians* (NY: AMS Press Inc., 1989), 240.

only 1,207 Bulgarians managed to reach Canada.¹⁹ By contrast, the number of Yugoslav immigrants for the same period was 28,214, whereas Greek immigrants numbered 67,168.²⁰ In fact even the few Bulgarians who dared to apply for immigration to Canada from within communist Bulgaria were not allowed to leave the country. In a letter to the Canadian Minister of External Affairs, the British Legation in Sofia stated that as of July 14, 1956 there were 11 Bulgarians approved for immigration to Canada who had been waiting for Bulgarian passports from 2 months to 2 years.²¹ The Canadian authorities were also very concerned that the Bulgarian Penal Law amendments of March 1953 introduced severe measures against Bulgarian immigrants and their families. According to the new law, Bulgarian citizens who left their country without permission would be considered traitors and sentenced to death unless they returned to Bulgaria within six months. Their relatives of Bulgaria would also be deprived of civil rights and part or whole of their property would be confiscated. In a confidential letter of June 9, 1953, the RCMP Commissioner in Ottawa informed the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs A.M. Ireland that a number of Bulgarian Canadians in Toronto received letters from their relatives in Bulgaria asking them to return home because they were afraid of government reprisals against them.²²

Nevertheless, the Bulgarian Canadians preferred to stay in Canada and yet, these brutal measures of the Bulgarian government diminished the number of Bulgarian immigrants to a very insignificant number. The small numbers of Bulgarian immigrants, as well as the process of assimilation of the second and third generations kept the number of Canadian citizens of Bulgarian origin virtually the same for the duration of the Cold War. In

¹⁹ Kostadin Gurdev, *Bălgarskata Emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada]. (Sofia: Marin Drinov Academic Press, 1994), 87.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

²¹ Immigration from Bulgaria (1954-1963), RG25, Vol. 6332, File 232-BE-40, Pt. 1

²² Threats against Bulgarian Residents in Canada and their Relatives in Bulgaria by the Government of Bulgaria, RG25, G2, Vol. 4392, File 11786-40, Pt. 1.

the 1941 Census of Canada, 1,157 Ontarians declared Bulgarian as their mother tongue.²³ In 1976, the number of Ontario residents declaring Bulgarian as their mother tongue dropped slightly to 1,125.²⁴ According to the 1986 Canadian Census, which could be considered the last Census for the Cold War period, the number of Bulgarians by birth was 1,130 in Ontario.²⁵ Kostadin Gurdev also noted that during the Cold War most second and third generation Bulgarian immigrants in Canada did not speak Bulgarian well and oftentimes declared simply a Canadian national identity.²⁶

Another reason for the voluntary assimilation of the Bulgarian Canadians and their unwillingness to declare a Bulgarian identity was the repressive communist regime in Bulgaria. Most of them opposed it, because they were usually political dissidents. The Bulgarian citizens who reached Canada during the Cold War were considered refugees and not immigrants by Canadian law.

In 1951, the United Nations adopted the *Convention, Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which was amended by the 1967 Protocol to become known as the *Geneva Convention*. Canada signed this Convention and also adopted a refugee definition, according to which a “refugee is any person outside their home country who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.”²⁷ In 1967, Canada adopted an amendment to the Immigration Act, which implemented the points system as the basis for the selection of new immigrants. The new points system emphasized, not only on the applicants’ education and qualifications,

²³ -----, *Census of Canada, 1941* (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1943), 750-1.

²⁴ -----, *1976 Census Canada. Population: Demographic Characteristics*. Vol. 2 (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1979), 21.

²⁵ -----, *Census Canada 1986. Language: Part I*. (Ottawa, Statistics Canada, 1987), 7.

²⁶ Gurdev, *Bălgarskata Emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada], 95.

²⁷ W. Gunther Plaut, “Refugee or Asylum: The Canadian Perspective”, In Adelman, Howard and C. Michael Lanphier, eds., *Refugee or Asylum? A Choice for Canada*, (Toronto: York Lanes Press Ltd., 1991), 75.

but also their level of knowledge of English and French. Thus, Canada divided its newcomers into three categories: humanitarian, which included refugees who were exempted from the points system; family class, which included spouses and close relatives of Canadian citizens and thus, this category was also exempted from the points system and finally, an independent category, i.e. skilled workers who had to pass the criteria of the points system in order to be admitted into Canada.²⁸

The Bulgarians could not enter Canada as skilled workers or under the family category, because the Bulgarian borders were completely closed. The only people who managed to reach Canada were political refugees, usually men. Thus, it is not surprising that, out of 1,615 Bulgarians by birth in Ontario in 1991, 990 were men.²⁹ Some of these immigrants had experienced repressions and prison terms in Bulgarian Gulags and thus, they associated Bulgaria with communism. A number of them severed all their connections with Bulgaria and were hesitant to declare a Bulgarian identity. Even the fervent Bulgarian nationalist from Pirin Macedonia, Pando Mladenov, opposed the presence of a Bulgarian national flag in his parish of St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church during the Cold War. Born in 1924, Pando Mladenov came to Canada in 1949 after a number of interrogations and arrests by the Bulgarian communist authorities due to Mladenov's refusal to declare a Macedonian national identity as a resident of Pirin Macedonia in the Bulgarian Census of 1946. The Bulgarian communist court sentenced Mladenov to death after his escape.³⁰ The paradox for Pando Mladenov, as well as for the author, was that he was sentenced to death as a national traitor to Bulgaria while he attempted to preserve his

²⁸ Valerie Knowles, *Forging Our Legacy: Canadian Citizenship and Immigration, 1900-1977* (Ottawa: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2000), 81-4.

²⁹ -----, *1991 Census, The Nation: Immigration and Citizenship* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1992), 18.

³⁰ Pando Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

Bulgarian national identity and refused to become a Macedonian! For him, during the Cold War, the Bulgarian national flag with its communist coat of arms and a red star was not a symbol of Bulgaria, but rather a symbol of the brutal communist regime in the country.³¹ Dr. Ivan Gadjev, also an immigrant from Pirin Macedonia, illustrated this love-hate relationship of the Bulgarian immigrants with Bulgaria and referred to Bulgaria in the period 1944-1989 as “Bulgaria-our stepmother.”³²

Nevertheless, opposition to the communist regime prompted Pando Mladenov, Ivan Gadjev and other Cold War refugees to be interested in the political situation in Bulgaria and Macedonia and to actively participate in anti-communist organizations such as the MPO and the Bulgarian National Front. They also promoted the traditional Bulgarian position that Macedonia is populated with ethnic Bulgarians. It should also be noted that during this period, particularly after the 1960s, many of the Bulgarian Canadians achieved professional success. After they earned university degrees they became doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, managers and even MPs in the Canadian Parliament.³³

After 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell and the Bulgarian borders were finally opened, there were two waves of immigration from Bulgaria to Canada. The first (1990-1995) consisted of primarily bogus refugees, who were economic migrants using flights from Sofia to Havana to land in Newfoundland, where the airplanes had stopped to refuel. These Bulgarians were usually poorly-educated and had no knowledge of English or French. Most of them claimed to be persecuted by the Bulgarian authorities due to their allegedly anti-communist views, religious affiliation or sexual orientation. Many of them managed to

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Ivan Gadjev, *Istoriya na Bâlgarskata Emigraciya v Severna Amerika: Bâlgariya, Mashteha Nasha (1944-1989)*, Vol. II [History of the Bulgarian Emigration to North America: Bulgaria: Our Stepmother (1944-1989), Vol. 2] (Goce Delchev: Institute for the History of the Bulgarian Emigration to North America “Iliya Todorov Gadjev,” 2006).

³³ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada], 83-100.

persuade Canadian authorities to grant them Permanent Resident Status in Canada. After they legalized their status in Canada, most of these quasi-refugees moved to Toronto, Ottawa and other Canadian cities. Once in Toronto, a number of them approached St. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church for help, but later when they learned English and found jobs, they became very passive and did not get involved in the religious and cultural life of the Bulgarian community.³⁴ The apathy of these new immigrants to the local Bulgarian churches and organizations, their lack of interest to the traditional historical debates over Macedonia and the political future of Bulgaria, which preoccupied the minds of the old immigrants, led to a rift with the old generation.³⁵

After 1995, Canadian immigration officers applied stricter rules on applicants for refugee status from Bulgaria and other former communist countries in Eastern Europe. Even though some Bulgarians continued to seek refugee status, their number decreased. Since 1996, a new wave of immigrants started to come from Bulgaria to Canada. This wave included primarily skilled workers, who were selected under the Canadian points' system as highly skilled professionals, as well as some people who came under the family category.³⁶

These new post-Cold War waves of Bulgarians added to the number of Bulgarians in Ontario. If the number of Bulgarian Canadians in Ontario was merely 1,615 in 1991,³⁷ it peaked at 6,665 in the 1996 Canadian Census.³⁸ The new immigrants came from all regions of Bulgaria, not only from Pirin Macedonia, and were less likely to be interested in the debate over Macedonia, as well as to become members of the MPO. They also did not

³⁴ Rev. Valeri Shumarov, interviewed by the author, 15 May 2007.

³⁵ George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007.

³⁶ Nadezhda Hristova, *Imigraciya v Kanada* [Immigration to Canada] (Sofiya: Vazov Publishing, 2000), 8-11.

³⁷ -----, *1991 Census, The Nation*, 18.

³⁸ -----, *1996 Census Profile of Federal Electoral Districts (1996 Representation): Age, Sex, Marital Status, Common-Law unions, Family Characteristics, Type of Dwelling and Household size, Immigration and Citizenship, and Languages* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1998), 137.

concentrate in Toronto, as the previous waves of immigrants. Even though half of them settled in Toronto, the rest of the 12,390 Bulgarian immigrants in Canada in 1996 lived across the land, including a few in Newfoundland and in Montreal, Ottawa, Calgary and Vancouver.³⁹

The divisions among the old generation immigrants and the arrival of the post-Cold War immigrants led to new rifts and conflicts in the Bulgarian community in Toronto and also, since the 1960s, to a continuing demise of the Bulgarian organizations and churches as a centre and a focal point of the Macedonian immigrants in Toronto.⁴⁰ The Bulgarian historian Kostadin Gurdev also admitted in his monograph on the Bulgarian immigration to Canada that in 1971, most of the immigrants from Aegean and Vardar Macedonia in Toronto had a “pro-Skopje orientation,”⁴¹ i.e. they had a Macedonian identity.

During the period 1940-1996, the major proponent of Bulgarian nationalism was the Macedonian Political Organization (MPO), which changed its name to Macedonian Patriotic Organization in 1952. Due to the anti-communist orientation of the MPO leadership, however, the MPO was in conflict, not only with the Yugoslav authorities and immigrants with Macedonian ethnic consciousness, but also with the Bulgarian communist authorities. The rift with the Bulgarian communist government ended the practice of importing Bulgarian textbooks to Bulgarian schools. Until 1956, the Bulgarian government supplied Bulgarian primers and textbooks to all Bulgarian church schools in North America. These textbooks were identical with the ones used in the Bulgarian State schools. However, after the inclusion of Marxist and Leninist ideology in these textbooks, the MPO decided to write its own

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁴⁰ Pando Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

⁴¹ Gurdev, *Bălgarskata Emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada], 92.

Bulgarian textbooks and refused to accept new editions from communist Bulgaria.⁴² In fact, until the 1960s, the MPO openly accused the Bulgarian communist government of betraying Bulgarian national interests due to the temporary recognition of the Macedonian nation by the Bulgarian Communists.

Regardless of the anti-communist orientation of the MPO, the Canadian government was suspicious of this organization because of its pro-Bulgarian orientation and its hostility to Greece and Yugoslavia which were Canadian allies in the fight against Communism. In a letter of April 9, 1952 L.B. Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs wrote Charles Henry, M.P. for Toronto-Rosedale and revealed to him quite sincerely the Canadian policy towards the Macedonian issue. Charles Henry was a friend of the Rev. Vasil Mihailov, a priest in the Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church of the Holy Trinity but also a Bulgarian nationalist and an MPO member. L.B. Pearson strongly disapproved Henry's friendliness to the Bulgarian cause noting:

It is naturally not for us at this time to take sides on the complex issues dividing the various Macedonian groups. In particular, we would not wish to appear to show friendliness towards a group which, though apparently anti-Communist, is pro-Bulgarian and hostile to Greece, a country with which we maintain the friendliest relations and with which we are allied in NATO, and Yugoslavia, a country whose continual survival against Soviet pressure is in the general interests of peace and security. I am sure you will appreciate my desire not to extend too friendly a hand to an organization wishing to bring charges – perhaps unfounded and certainly hostile – against our ally Greece.⁴³

Thus, L.B. Pearson clearly stated that Canada was not concerned with the real situation in Macedonia or the plight of its Slavic population. The only Canadian concern was how Canada could show full support to its Balkan allies. In the global fight against the communist threat, the Macedono-Bulgarians seemed to be dispensable.

⁴² Trendafil Mitev, *The Macedonian Patriotic Organization in the United States, Canada and Australia* (Sofia: Macedonian Scientific Institute, 2000), 89.

⁴³ Activities of Macedonians in US and Canada in Connection with the Disorders in Greece (1949-1954), RG 25, G2, Vol. 3349, File 9606-A-40, Pt. 1

In fact, L.B. Pearson predicted quite accurately that incautious Canadian support of the Bulgarian position in Macedonia might cause a disruption in the friendly relations between Canada and Greece. Regardless of the official Canadian policy of support to Greece and Yugoslavia, the Canadian Labour Minister Michael Starr accepted an invitation to deliver a speech at the annual MPO Congress in Toronto, held in August, 1958. Michael Starr spoke to the MPO members in both English and Bulgarian and electrified his audience with the words: "Macedonia – the land that gave birth to the Slav-Bulgarian alphabet and Holy Writ to all the Slav peoples; Macedonia – which was the cradle of Bulgarian Enlightenment and culture – must be free, and will be free! Be staunch, and work with sincerity and firmness for the liberation of Macedonia!"⁴⁴ Quite naturally, this speech led to furious editorials into the Greek and Yugoslav press and letters of protest to the Canadian embassies in Athens and Belgrade. By November 1958, the speech created a diplomatic scandal and the Greek media demanded the Greek Ambassador to be recalled from Ottawa. The Canadian government had to apologize and to distance itself from the personal view of Michael Starr.⁴⁵ Since then, no Canadian government representative dared to reveal so openly their personal view on the Macedonian issue.

The analyses of the Canadian government and RCMP predicting that the MPO might quickly change its position towards the Bulgarian communist government proved to be very accurate. Indeed, the change of the Bulgarian government's policy in the 1960s concerning the Macedonian issue and the renunciation of the previous recognition of the Macedonian

⁴⁴ Activities of Macedonians in US and Canada- Treatment of Macedonians in Greece and Yugoslavia (1954-1963), RG 25, Vol. 8287, File 9606-A-40, Pt. 2

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

nation and language bettered the relations of the Bulgarian authorities with the MPO. Thus, in the 1970s, members of the Central Committee of the MPO started to visit Bulgaria.⁴⁶

Since its founding, the major concern of the MPO leadership has been the situation in Macedonia. According to circumstances, the MPO used different tactics. During the Second World War, after the initial enthusiastic support of the Bulgarian troops, who annexed Vardar Macedonia to Bulgaria, the MPO interrupted its political activities in order to prevent suspicions by the Canadian authorities that the organization was pro-Nazi.⁴⁷ In 1944, however, when it was clear that the Germans were losing the war and thus, their Bulgarian allies would have to eventually withdraw from both Aegean and Vardar Macedonia, the MPO attempted to lobby the White House in order to prevent the return of Serbian rule in the area. Delegates of the MPO and the Macedono-Bulgarian Churches in Canada and the United States gathered in Akron, Ohio on April 23, 1944 and wrote a letter to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. They explained that Macedonia was a multicultural region with three million inhabitants, including Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, Turks, Jews, Serbs and some Romanians. Thus, with so many ethnic elements, the MPO suggested that the best solution would be a Macedonian federation similar to Switzerland, in which all these ethnicities could freely express their identity and use their language.⁴⁸ Hoping to preserve both the predominantly Bulgarian ethnicity of the region and to prevent the spread of communism, the 1954 MPO Annual Convention, held again in Akron, Ohio issued a similar declaration, appealing to the International community for the creation of “a free and independent state of

⁴⁶ Mitev, *The Macedonian Patriotic Organization*, 100.

⁴⁷ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 240.

⁴⁸ MPO letter to Mr. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, President of the United States, Akron, Ohio, April 23, 1944 (MHSO Macedonian Collection).

Macedonia, organized on the example of the Swiss State, Switzerland in the Balkans.”⁴⁹ Thus, for first time, the most right-wing nationalist Bulgarian organization was ready to propose an independent Macedonian state, even though the MPO imagined this state as a multiethnic state, in which “Macedonian” was a civic, and not ethnic, identity.

These declarations, however, did not lead to any changes in the political situation of Macedonia. Thus, from the late 1950s until the 1990s, the MPO concentrated its efforts on exposing Yugoslav and Greek atrocities against ethnic Bulgarians in Macedonia. They also affirmed the Bulgarian ethnicity of the Macedonian Slavs. Tito’s Yugoslavia was the primary target of the MPO during the Cold War. Every year, the MPO published newspaper articles and pamphlets which accused Yugoslavia of denationalization of the Macedonian Bulgarians. The 1956 MPO pamphlet, *Nyakolko Osvetleniya za Makedoniya* [Some Clarifications on Macedonia] argued that between 1918 and 1941, the Serbs killed over 30,000 ethnic Bulgarians in Macedonia, but this fact was taboo in Tito’s Yugoslavia.⁵⁰ The 1957 pamphlet by Christ Anastasoff after his visit to Yugoslav Macedonia was much more explicit. Anastasoff was shocked to see that the people in Skopje, Bitola and other Yugoslav Macedonian cities were afraid to talk about Bulgarian national heroes, symbols or language. A number of people said to Anastasoff that he spoke very good Macedonian, but he objected that he was speaking his native Bulgarian.⁵¹ He also renounced the Serbian propaganda and the infusion of Serbian words, which replaced the traditionally used Bulgarian terms. Anastasoff concluded that “until 1944 no one has ever heard of such nonsense as a

⁴⁹ MPO Annual Convention, Akron, Ohio, Sep 5-7, 1954 “The Macedonian Problem and Its Solution (MHSO Macedonian Collection).

⁵⁰ -----, *Nyakolko Osvetleniya za Makedoniya* [Some Clarifications on Macedonia] (Indianapolis: MPO, 1956), 7.

⁵¹ Christ Anastasoff, *A Visit to Yugoslav Macedonia* (Indianapolis: MPO, 1957), 6, 10.

“Macedonian language” or a “Macedonian nation.”⁵² The 38th MPO Convention in Chicago of 1959 issued a declaration, entitled “In Defense of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Macedonia.” Together with the clergy of the Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Churches in North America, they renounced the attempts of the Yugoslav communists to create a Macedonian Orthodox Church in the Old Bulgarian capital city of Ohrid, “the Bulgarian Jerusalem.”⁵³

In 1960, the Greek government became the primary target of the MPO with the pamphlet *DISCLOSURE: On the Situation of the Bulgarians in Greek Macedonia*. It accused Greece of assimilationist policies against ethnic Bulgarians in Aegean Macedonia.⁵⁴ In the 1970s and 1980s, Yugoslavia was almost the sole target for criticism of the MPO and the leaders of the organization accused the Yugoslav regime that “the so called “Macedonian” language was a clever way to Serbianize the Macedono-Bulgarians”⁵⁵

The disintegration of Yugoslavia and Macedonian independence did not change the position of the MPO leadership towards the Macedonian nation and language. The 1993 MPO Annual Convention in Toronto invited the Bulgarian Chief Prosecutor Ivan Tatarchev, whose grandfather was among the founders of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), to their Convention. The MPO President Ivan Lebamoff declared at the Convention that Bulgaria and Macedonia were two countries with the same people. He denied the existence of a separate Macedonian language, nation and church.⁵⁶ As late as

⁵² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵³ “In Defense of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church of Macedonia,” Declaration of the 38th MPO Convention held in Chicago, Sep 8, 1959 (MHSO Macedonian Collection).

⁵⁴ -----, *DISCLOSURE: On the Situation of the Bulgarians in Greek Macedonia* (Indianapolis: MPO, 1960) MHSO Macedonian Collection.

⁵⁵ 1966 MPO Declaration on the Macedonian Question, Cleveland, September 6, 1966 (MHSO Macedonian Collection).

⁵⁶ -----, “MPO – Borba za Dve Drzavi so Ist Narod” [MPO: A Struggle for Two Countries with the Same People], *Macedonia*, year 11, no. 113, 15 March 1994, 5.

2000, Ivan Lebamoff's brother George Lebamoff spoke as President of the MPO with a Macedonian journalist and explained that for him and MPO, Macedonian is a civic and not an ethnic identity. "All people in Macedonia are Macedonians, because they are Macedonian citizens and have Macedonian passports, but by ethnicity they are Bulgarians, Albanians, Turks, etc."⁵⁷

Despite these overwhelming demonstrations of Bulgarian nationalism, in 1994 there was a rift in the MPO involving its Chapters in Toronto: MPO Victory, and MPO Lyuben Dimitroff (formerly Justice). The leaders of the MPO Chapters in Toronto, Ivan Karadjov and George Mladenov, are fervent Bulgarian nationalists and they do not wish to accept the existence of a separate Macedonian state, even if it uses officially the Bulgarian language and its citizens declare ethnic Bulgarian and Macedonian civic national identity.⁵⁸ The official MPO position is not so extreme. The MPO leadership in Indiana does not mind the existence of a separate independent Macedonian state if its population uses "Macedonian" as a civic identity, as the Lebamoff Brothers explained. The other serious issue for the two local leaders in Toronto was that regardless of the official denial of the existence of the Macedonian language, the *Macedonian Tribune* started to accept articles written in Macedonian alongside English and Bulgarian. According to George Mladenov "the Serbomans conquered the MPO from the inside like a Trojan horse."⁵⁹ Due to these disagreements, the MPO Chapter from Toronto "Lyuben Dimitroff" was expelled in 1994. George Mladenov started to issue an electronic newspaper only in Bulgarian and English

⁵⁷ Ljupčo Zikov, "Vaka Nemate Idnina' [You Do Not Have a Future This Way], *The Capital*, no. 300, 28 July 2005, 1.

⁵⁸ Pando Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007; George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007.

⁵⁹ George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007.

called *Makedonska Tribuna* [Macedonian Tribune] in 1994, which the MPO official web site condemned as illegitimate, since it copies the name of the original MPO newspaper.⁶⁰

The major reason for this MPO split was a change of generations in the organization. The present leaders of the MPO are primarily fervent Bulgarian nationalists from Macedonia, born in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Most members during the Cold War were also from the same generation. The new Bulgarian immigrants, who came in the 1990s, were not interested in joining the MPO. At present, virtually all people who want to join the MPO are from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), i.e. usually immigrants with a Macedonian national identity. Thus, it is only a matter of time before the MPO becomes an organization of the ethnic Macedonian communities in the USA and Canada. Pando Mladenov, an active member of the maverick MPO Lyuben Dimitroff, pointed out that “unfortunately the young Bulgarians are not interested at all in the MPO and we are reaching our demise.”⁶¹

Another important right-wing organization, whose primary goal was to oppose communism and to raise awareness among the general Canadian public and institutions about the communist regime and communist crimes in Bulgaria was the Bulgarian National Front (BNF). The BNF was founded in 1947 in Munich, Germany with the goal of uniting all right-wing Bulgarian immigrants in Western Europe and North America against the Bulgarian Communist Party and regime. The BNF members also wanted to prevent the infiltration of Bulgarian ethnic communities by communist agents and they collaborated with Croatian and other anti-communist organizations of Eastern European immigrants.⁶²

⁶⁰ Unauthorized “Macedonian Tribune” [<http://www.macedonian.org/Media/falsetribune.asp>].

⁶¹ Pando Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

⁶² Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata Emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada], 178-9.

Soon after the founding of the BNF, its members split the organization into three, due to an internal struggle for power. One of the BNF branches was formed in Toronto in 1951 under the leadership of Hristo Statev and Pencho Peltekov. They started to issue the local BNF newspaper *Svoboda* [Freedom]. This was the only organization which denied any offers for visits to Bulgaria or communication with the Bulgarian communist authorities. Even in the 1980s, when the MPO softened its position against the communist regime in Bulgaria, the BNF continued to criticize communist Bulgaria. In 1983, the BNF President organized a ceremony at St. John of Rila Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Niagara Falls for the opening of a monument to the Bulgarian victims of communism. The ceremony was attended by local Canadian politicians and the President of the United Croats, Ante Marković.⁶³

Another influential organization among the anti-communist Bulgarian immigrants was the Bulgarian-Canadian Association (BCA), founded in Toronto in 1958. This association included among its founders former Bulgarian students in Germany who fled to Canada after the Second World War. It included the lawyer John Grudeff, one of the leaders of the Macedono-Bulgarian community in the interwar period. The BCA members visited communist Bulgaria and they considered themselves a shield against the Skopje propaganda and attempts for infiltrating and splitting the Macedono-Bulgarian community.⁶⁴ The BCA and MPO influence was very strong among the pre-WW II immigrants but, after the 1960s, when the Yugoslav Macedonian immigrants started to arrive, this influence waned and these organizations failed to attract the majority of the newcomers. John Grudeff reflected this conflict between the ethnic identity of the old and the new immigrants, explaining that as a lawyer he helped many Bulgarian immigrants from Macedonia to sponsor their relatives to

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 179-80.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 142.

Canada. At first, his clients were happy to see their nephews and nieces in Canada but later they started to complain to Grudeff that they could not recognize their own family members. They complained that the Yugoslav newcomers told them that they were not Bulgarians but Macedonians and they spoke Macedonian, not Bulgarian.⁶⁵ Thus, since the 1960s, the Macedonian ethnic identity gained momentum in Canada.

The benevolent associations of villages, representing immigrants from all parts of Macedonia, actively participated in the community life of the interwar Bulgarian immigrants but, by the 1960s, they died out. Some of them discontinued their existence, because their members retired or passed away, whereas other village societies, such as the Zhelevo Benevolent Society started to be influenced by the new Yugoslav Macedonian newcomers, who transformed them from Bulgarian into Macedonian organizations.⁶⁶

The left-wing Bulgarian immigrants continued to be in an acute conflict with the right-wing Bulgarian immigrants and their organizations throughout the Cold War. The left-wing organizations were strongly influenced by the Bulgarian Communist Party. Due to this influence, the Bulgarian communists were in conflict with the communist organizations which supported Tito and his Macedonian policies. Even before the Tito-Stalin rift of 1948, in 1941, a group of Macedono-Bulgarians led by Manol Dimov and Dincho Ralley left the Macedonian People's Union to form their own organization, the Independent Mutual Benefit Federation (IMBF) with Manol Dimov as President and Dincho Ralley as a secretary.⁶⁷ Born in the Aegean Macedonian village of Zagorichane, Dincho Ralley had a Bulgarian ethnic identity but his ultimate allegiance was to the Bulgarian Communist Party. Ralley called the IMBF a "progressive organization" and avoided the term "communist" in his interview with

⁶⁵ John Grudeff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 9 February 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

⁶⁶ Gurdev, *Bâlgarskata emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada], 140-55.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 157.

Irene Markoff and yet, he admitted that he cried and mourned the death of the faithful Bulgarian Stalinist, George Dimitrov, who was guilty of brutal communist repressions in Bulgaria during the period 1944-1948.⁶⁸

In 1945 the left-wing Bulgarian immigrants created the Bulgarian Canadian People's Union, which started publishing the pro-communist newspaper *Novo Vreme* [New Time].⁶⁹

The Bulgarian left-wing organizations, however, were very weak, particularly after the 1960s for two major reasons. First, starting in 1959 and continuing into the 1960s, many pro-Macedonian members of the Bulgarian Canadian People's Union and IBMF joined the organizations of the new Yugoslav Macedonian immigrants, who were strongly pro-Tito oriented and thus, anti-Bulgarian. Thus, the influence of the Macedono-Bulgarian organizations among the Macedonian immigrants waned after the 1960s. And on the other hand, the Canadian authorities constantly monitored all communist organizations in Canada and official contacts with the Bulgarian Communist Party and its representatives in the Bulgarian consulates and embassies became difficult. Thus, in 1960 the Macedonian People's Union ceased to exist, followed by the IMBF in 1972.⁷⁰ The newspaper *Novo Vreme* [New Time] also ceased publishing in 1978 at the recommendation of the Bulgarian Communist Party.⁷¹ In 1957, the left-wing Bulgarian immigrants started to publish the newspaper *Makedonski glas* [Macedonian Voice], which followed the new attempt of the Bulgarian Communist Party to warm its relations with Tito's Yugoslavia. Even though the newspaper was published in Bulgarian and the editor supported the argument that both Bulgarians and Macedonians spoke Bulgarian, the newspaper supported the thesis that

⁶⁸ Dincho Ralley, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 26 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

⁶⁹ Gurdev, *Bălgarskata Emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada], 162.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 168-74.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 192.

Macedonians were a separate ethnic nation. Nevertheless, the Yugoslav consul and the Yugoslav Macedonians were very hostile to this newspaper because it was published in Bulgarian and it did not recognize the Macedonian language. Thus, due to the lack of readers and financial support, the newspaper folded in May of 1961.⁷²

The attempts of the Bulgarian communist authorities to infiltrate and control the Bulgarian immigrants and their organizations and churches led to a new church rift in the 1970s. Reverend Vassil Mihailoff from Bitola, Vardar Macedonia, who initiated the first church split in 1941, led the second church split and in 1972 he left St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church to form the third Bulgarian church in Toronto – Holy Trinity Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Most members of the church were strong anti-communists and members of the Bulgarian National Front (BNF) and the MPO. The new church joined the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile but its Bulgarian character was and is still undisputable. In fact, in 1982, the church joined the Bulgarian Synod after the death of Vassil Mihailoff.⁷³ Reverend Mihailoff explained quite clearly the reasons for the new church rift in an interview with Irene Markoff in 1977. He confirmed that 99 % of his parishioners were Bulgarians from Macedonia, including third and fourth generations with very few new arrivals from Yugoslav Macedonia and Greece. Nevertheless, the priest argued that: “Even though our mother church is the Bulgarian church, as a Canadian citizen I believe it is the best way for us to keep away our people from the communist government of Bulgaria. The communist government of Bulgaria was trying to influence our people with their propaganda through the church.”⁷⁴ The church also organized a Bulgarian Sunday

⁷² *Ibid.*, 192-6.

⁷³ Rev. Krâstan Vukashinov, interviewed by the author, 17 May 2007.

⁷⁴ Rev. Vasil Mihailoff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 7 February 1977.

school and Bulgarian folk dance group.⁷⁵ In an interview with the author, the current priest of Holy Trinity Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Krâstan Vukashinov, also confirmed the testimony of the church founder Rev. V. Mihailoff and denied the claims of the ethnic Macedonians that his church is Macedonian as “mere speculations.”⁷⁶

The three Macedono-Bulgarian churches in Toronto kept their allegiance to the Bulgarian ethnic identity and church. They continued to attract Bulgarian immigrants from Bulgaria proper and Macedonia during the Cold War but it is quite evident that their influence among the Macedonian immigrants is quite weak and most of their members are older generation Macedonian Bulgarians. After the 1960s, the influence of the Bulgarian organizations in Toronto on the new Macedonian immigrants from Yugoslavia and Greece was very weak and this trend continued after the end of the Cold War. Mostly Macedono-Bulgarians from Pirin Macedonia, which is still part of Bulgaria, continue to join the Bulgarian churches and organizations in Toronto. The various political, social and generation rifts within the Bulgarian Canadian community and the lack of interest in ethnic community life by the post-Cold War newcomers weakened the Bulgarian Canadian community and its organizations.

4.4: Hellenic Macedonians

Greek immigration to Canada was insignificant during the 1940s and in the period 1941-1950, only 3,043 Greeks immigrated to Canada.⁷⁷ In the next two decades, however,

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Rev. Krâstan Vukashinov, interviewed by the author, 17 May 2007.

⁷⁷ Anastasios M. Tamis and Efrosini Gavaki. *From Migrants to Citizens: Greek Migration in Australia and Canada* (Melbourne: National Centre for Hellenic Studies and Research La Trobe University, 2002), 108.

the number of Greek immigrants increased by 39,832 during 1951-1960, and 62,183 during the 1961-1970 period.⁷⁸ In the early 1970s, however, when the economic situation in Greece started to improve, the number of Greek immigrants to Canada decreased dramatically with only 29,017 coming in 1971-1980 and only 4,790 during next decade.⁷⁹ This trend continued in the 1990s. The 1991 Canadian Census listed 83,675 Canadians born in Greece,⁸⁰ whereas the 1996 Canadian Census figures indicated a slight decrease to 79,690 born in Greece.⁸¹ Statistics Canada data also demonstrated clearly that roughly 60 percent of Greek-born Canadians or 49,250 respondents preferred to settle in Ontario.⁸² The number of Greek-born Canadians in Ontario, together with those who claimed Greek ethnic origin, is about 120,000.⁸³

Due to their relatively large numbers, the Greek immigrants managed to preserve their native language and many of the first generation Greek immigrants were not very eager to master English. In this regard they were similar to the large Italian and Portuguese communities in Canada.⁸⁴ Thus, at least until the 1990s, the Hellenic communities in Canada were not concerned about their assimilation into mainstream society and the loss of the Greek language. During the 1990s, however, two new trends started to threaten the domination of the Greek language and culture in the Canadian Hellenic community. The second and third generation Hellenic Canadians started to prefer English as their primary language and secondly, Canada started to lose an increasing number of Greek Canadians, who preferred to live in Greece. The returning immigrants were both retired Greek

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁸⁰ -----, *1991 Census, The Nation*, 20.

⁸¹ -----, *1996 Census Profile of Federal Electoral Districts*, 7.

⁸² -----, *1991 Census, The Nation*, 20.

⁸³ -----, *1996 Census Profile of Federal Electoral Districts*, 11.

⁸⁴ Judith A. Nagata. "Adaptation and Integration of Greek Working Class Immigrants in the City of Toronto, Canada: A Situational Approach," *International Migration Review* 4 (1), (Autumn 1969): 45.

Canadians, who preferred the warm Mediterranean climate of their homeland, and young Greek Canadians, who decided to take advantage of the improved economic situation in Greece and went to look for opportunities there.⁸⁵ Also, the birth rate of the second generation was lower compared to their parents and for the first time in the 1990s, the majority of the Greek-Canadian children were born in Canada. The termination of federal funding for heritage schools also led to a significant decline in the number of Greek Canadian children attending Greek-language schools in Canada.⁸⁶ All these factors affected negatively the Hellenic Canadian community in the 1990s and accelerated its linguistic and cultural assimilation, a trend which continues.

The vast majority of Greek immigrants preferred to settle in large urban centres even though these newcomers came from both rural and urban areas all across Greece. In fact, before the 1970s, many of the Greek immigrants were unskilled labourers from rural Greece, whereas after the implementation of the Canadian points system for the selection of immigrants in 1967, most newcomers from Greece were either sponsored relatives of Greek Canadians or well-educated Greeks from urban centres.⁸⁷

Similar to most other southern and central European ethnic groups, the churches became one of the focal points of the Greek community in Canada. The official religion in Greece is the Greek Orthodox rite of Christianity and most Greeks are at least formally members of the Orthodox Church. The Greek Orthodox Metropolitan in Toronto is under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Istanbul. Even though the traditional authority of the priests waned in Canada, and many Greek Canadians in Toronto go to church primarily on important religious holidays, in 1997 there were more than 60 Greek Orthodox

⁸⁵ Tamis and Gavaki. *From Migrants to Citizens*, 117-8.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 207-8.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 117.

parishes in Canada. Most of the churches are located in Toronto and Montreal but there are also Greek churches in smaller towns across Canada. Most of these churches were erected after the Second World War, when the Greeks started to come into Canada in larger numbers.⁸⁸ A small number of Greek Canadians founded three parishes in Toronto and three parishes in Montreal, which followed the Julian Calendar and thus, they continue to be under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia, or the Church of the True Christians of Greece. The people in these churches do not deny their Greek ethnic identity. In fact, many of them are involved in the larger Greek community and their separate churches are based on purely religious grounds.⁸⁹

The years after the Second World War were also a time of flourishing Greek ethnocultural and philanthropic associations. By the mid-1970s, there were more than 90 Greek Canadian associations, situated primarily in Ontario and Quebec and to a lesser extent in British Columbia.⁹⁰ One of the most important of these organizations became the Hellenic Canadian Cultural Society (HCCS), which was founded in Toronto in 1961 with Dr. L. Polymenakos as President.⁹¹ The members of the HCCS have followed closely political developments in Greece and Cyprus and even attempted to influence Canadian foreign policy towards the Balkans. In August of 1974, HCCS members from Toronto sent a telegram to Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau which stated: "You are respectfully requested to use the power of your office to the effect that a permanent ceasefire is established in Cyprus, and that the territorial integrity and independence of Cyprus are restored."⁹² Regardless of the

⁸⁸ Peter D. Chimbos, "Greeks" In Paul Robert Magosci, ed. *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (Toronto: MHSO-University of Toronto Press, 1999), 622-3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 623.

⁹⁰ Peter D. Chimbos, *The Canadian Odyssey: The Greek Experience in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1980), 77-81.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 80.

fervent Greek patriotism of the HCCS and the sponsorship of Greek educational and cultural initiatives by its members, the HCCS has serious critics in the Greek community. The criticisms have been aimed primarily at the HCCS by-laws, which require every member of the organization to be, not only of Greek descent, but also with a university degree — a requirement which created an elitist organization, according to critics.⁹³

As sociologist Peter D. Chimbos observed, many Canadians perceive the Greek Canadian community, as well as all ethnic communities, as strong unified groups, which act unanimously to fight for their rights and privileges.⁹⁴ The reality is, however, that the Greek community has its divisions and internal conflicts, regardless of its numerous churches and organizations which created the deceptive image of Greek Canadian cohesion.

There was no major church in the Greek Canadian community which could be compared to the church division in the Bulgarian Canadian community. The Julian Calendar supporters continue to be no more than a few thousand. Conflict within the Greek Canadian community developed, however, between the church and the civic-oriented liberal Greek Canadians and their organizations. The Orthodox priests traditionally were the only leaders of the Greek communities. In fact, during the long period of Ottoman rule, the priests were the only genuine authority for the ethnic Greeks in the Balkans. The post-war Greek immigrants, however, expected that the Orthodox Church would remain solely in its religious domain, while the Greek ethnocultural organizations would have the task of organizing most of the cultural, political and educational activities of the Greek Canadian communities. A *Hellenic Echo* editorial, cited by Peter Chimbos, expressed clearly the position of the liberal side: “Don’t you think that the time has passed when priests and the Holy Archdiocese of

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

North and South America involved themselves in affairs that were not in accordance with their religious duties? The only thing we want from you is advice and guidance and not orders.”⁹⁵ The conflict arose from the fact that the Greek Orthodox ecclesiastical leaders refused to acknowledge the fact that the time and the place have radically changed since Ottoman Greece. Hence, it is quite difficult for a modern educated group of Greek Canadians in Toronto to regard solely the Orthodox priests as their leaders. The Greek Orthodox Bishop in Canada Sotiros described his community in Toronto as:

The Greek community is not a civic organization; it is purely an ecclesiastical organization which unreservedly and irrevocably is under the jurisdictions of the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America. It is perfectly natural, therefore, for church leadership to demand from the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto Inc. to comply with church regulations. The problems of the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto Inc. will be solved only when the community itself consciously accepts the fact that it is an ecclesiastical organization.⁹⁶

It is certain that the Greek Orthodox Church will continue to play an important role in the Greek Canadian community. However, it is also very unlikely that the antagonism between the church and the civic community leaders will be resolved in favour of absolute obedience to the authoritarian conservative power of the Greek Orthodox Bishops and priests.

The antagonism between older generation (interwar period immigrants) and the newer generation (post-Second World War immigrants) was also very visible until the 1970s. This conflict, however, was based more on competition for prestige and positions in the Greek community than on generational or ideological differences. The interwar immigrants were founders of many Greek associations and churches in Toronto and thus they often occupied prominent positions in these organizations. These old immigrants, however, were poorly educated and they disliked the well-educated new immigrants, who were competing

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

with the old immigrants to replace them on church committees and association councils. The older generation immigrants used all the leverage they had available to prevent this 'internal coup', including the Greek ethnic media and the support of their relatives and friends during elections of ethnocultural organizations. Nevertheless, due to their greater numbers and qualifications, the newcomers and the second generation Greek Canadians eventually dominated the Greek ethnic community of Toronto by the mid-1970s.⁹⁷

The Greek community was also divided by its political affiliations. The Greek Canadian community has always had members who were actively interested in Greek politics. The right-wing Greek Canadians gravitated around the Orthodox Church leaders, who were the traditional supporters of conservative and authoritarian policies. Thus, the right-wing Greek Canadians along with the Greek Orthodox Church in Canada supported the military dictatorship in Greece after the coup of 1967. The left-wing Greek Canadians joined the efforts of Andreas Papandreou to create in Toronto the Panhellenic Liberation Movement (PAK) in 1968.⁹⁸ After the end of Papandreou's exile, his Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), as well as the major right-wing party in Greece *New Democracy*, opened branches in the 1980s in Toronto and other large Canadian cities to continue the connection between Greece and its diaspora in Canada.⁹⁹

The major political concerns of the Greek Canadians during the Cold War were related to the political turmoil in Greece and Cyprus. The disintegration of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, however, diverted the attention of Greek Canadians to Greece's northwestern borders. In 1992-1995, all Greek Canadian organizations periodically organized large protests in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa against the recognition of the Former Yugoslav

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁹⁸ Chimbos, "Greeks" In Magosci, ed. *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples*, 623.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 624.

Republic of Macedonia and its use of ancient Hellenic symbols and the name 'Macedonia.' On 29 February 1992, a Greek anti-FYROM rally in Ottawa mustered the support of over twenty thousand followers.¹⁰⁰

Certainly not all protesters traced their roots to Aegean Macedonia, but the protests against the recognition of the FYROM were rather a demonstration of pan-Hellenic solidarity. The Hellenic Macedonians in Toronto, however, have always taken a prominent place in the opposition against the FYROM, which leads to the interesting issue of the regional divisions of the Greek Canadian diaspora.

All Greek regions sent immigrants to Canada but the immigration from Aegean Macedonia was very intense for both economic and political reasons, as Judith Nagata observed.¹⁰¹ According to Anastasios Tamis and Efrosini Gavaki, the immigrants from Aegean Macedonia to Canada in the 1970s were about 14-16 percent of the total Greek immigration to Canada.¹⁰² Judith Nagata, however, concluded in 1969 that the share of Aegean Macedonian immigrants in Toronto was approximately 55 percent of the total number of Greeks in the city.¹⁰³ It is not an easy task to estimate the total number of the Aegean Macedonians, because they belong to three different communities, Greek, Macedonian, and Bulgarian. Thus, Vicky Smiaris did not even attempt to give a number during an interview with the author.¹⁰⁴ Jim Karas, the current President of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario, gave a more realistic number. He estimated that probably one third of the Greek immigrants in Toronto could trace their roots to Aegean

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 624.

¹⁰¹ Nagata, "Adaptation and Integration," 50.

¹⁰² Tamis and Gavaki. *From Migrants to Citizens*, 122.

¹⁰³ Nagata, "Adaptation and Integration," 50.

¹⁰⁴ Vicky Smiaris, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

Macedonia.¹⁰⁵ One third is less than Nagata's estimate but it still represents about 40,000 Greek Canadians in Toronto. It is quite probable that the number of Greek Canadians from Aegean Macedonia is at least one third, because due to the Greek Civil War (1946-1949) and the military dictatorship (1967-1974), numerous refugees left Aegean Macedonia in the 1950s-1970s.¹⁰⁶

The Aegean Macedonians who came to Toronto could be divided into two groups according to their ethnic origin and according to their ethnonational affiliation. By ethnic origin, the Aegean Macedonian immigrants are ethnic Greeks, with Greek as their native tongue, and ethnic Slavs, with a Macedonian dialect of the Bulgarian language as their native tongue. By ethnonational affiliation, the Aegean Macedonians can be divided into three groups — those, who identify as Greeks by nationality, those who identify as ethnic Macedonians and, finally, those who claim a Bulgarian ethnic identity. Peter Chimbos classified these groups as: Greek Macedonian, Bulgarian Macedonian and Yugoslav Macedonian.¹⁰⁷ This thesis also employs these terms but it more often classifies them as: Hellenic Macedonian, Macedono-Bulgarian and ethnic Macedonian, a term that coincided with Yugoslav Macedonian until the disintegration of Yugoslavia. The Hellenic Macedonian category includes virtually all ethnic Greeks, who are also Greek native speakers. The ethnic Slavs, or to employ the Greek term- the *Slavophones*, are much more interesting in their ethnic affiliations, because they have joined three different ethnic communities – Greek, Macedonian and Bulgarian. The Slavs from Aegean Macedonia, who chose to identify themselves as ethnic Greeks have always been resented by the Macedonian and Bulgarian ethnic communities and called traitors, *Grkomans* and patriarchists. It is curious to note that

¹⁰⁵ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

¹⁰⁶ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 265-7.

¹⁰⁷ Chimbos, *The Canadian Odyssey*, 98.

Hellenic Macedonians of Slavic origin have always been very vocal both in the expression of their Greek national identity and in the denial of the existence of a separate ethnic Macedonian identity. A Greek restaurateur in Toronto expressed his position by stating to Peter Vasiliadis: “I am not a Macedonian no matter if I do speak the language. It is a leftover from my youth and not important to the present circumstances. Yes, I come from the area you can call Macedonia and my family had lived there for many years, but even then, and especially now, we are Greeks.”¹⁰⁸ Jim Karas, as a President of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario expressed a similar position during an interview with the author. He admitted that he spoke Bulgarian and he did speak it during the interview. He also added that, regardless of his Slavic origin, his family has always felt Greek and they belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church.¹⁰⁹ Such Slavophone Hellenic Macedonians formed a number of village associations and still form the core of the most anti-Macedonian Greek association in Toronto and in North America, The Pan-Macedonian Association.

The Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario is an offshoot of the U.S.-based Pan-Macedonian Association, which was formed in New York in 1947. It was established in 1960 in Toronto, and in 1975 it became an umbrella organization of other Hellenic Macedonian societies within Ontario. At the end of 1993 it had fifty-one chapters, sixteen with women’s auxiliaries. The Pan-Macedonian Association sponsors and organizes lectures, seminars, cultural activities, and fundraising events. It has organized protests against supporters of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the use of the name “Macedonia” and ancient Macedonian symbols by non-Greeks.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 272.

¹⁰⁹ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

¹¹⁰ Gurdev, *Bălgarskata emigraciya v Kanada* [The Bulgarian Emigration to Canada], 178-83.

Undoubtedly, many Slavs from Aegean Macedonia genuinely and voluntarily declared a Greek national identity after they entered Canada but there were also Slavs who did it because of fear and external pressure. The Greek government actively encouraged the immigration of Slavs from Aegean Macedonia after the Civil War as a way of solving its minority problem. Nevertheless, the Greek authorities became concerned that political immigrants, who identified as Bulgarians or Macedonians, might spread anti-Greek propaganda. Thus, the Greek authorities used informants, police, diplomats and security services to select and pressure the Slavs from Aegean Macedonia to declare a Greek identity even after their immigration to the New World.¹¹¹ Greek diplomats in Canada were concerned that, in 1958 Hellenic Macedonians from villages around Kastoria organized only one benevolent association, compared to ten Macedono-Bulgarian village societies, formed by people from the same region.¹¹² Thus, one of the main tasks of the Pan-Macedonian Association chapter in Toronto was to bring back the majority of these immigrants to the Greek ethnic community. In order to achieve this goal, the Greek government did not hesitate to use pressure and intimidation. Charles Price mentioned the case of an ethnic Bulgarian family from Aegean Macedonia, who baptized their child at the Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church and thus, received letters from relatives in Greece that due to this baptism, they were subjected to police surveillance and threats of being fired from their work.¹¹³

Intimidation measures of the Greek authorities continue to the present against both Bulgarians and Macedonians born in Greece. The Reverend Boris Drangov, a priest at St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church noted during his interview with the author

¹¹¹ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 268.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 270.

¹¹³ Charles Price, *Southern Europeans in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1963), 317.

that a Bulgarian, who was a parishioner in his church, was questioned by the local police in his native Aegean Macedonian village regarding the church he attended in Toronto. When he replied that he did not attend any church, the policeman told him that they know very well that he attended the Bulgarian and not the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George.¹¹⁴ The Greek Consulate in Toronto also participated in the intimidation of ethnic Macedonian immigrants from Aegean Macedonia. Dragi Stojkovski, President of United Macedonians, recalled that in 1993, when he made a list of ethnic Macedonians who would go by bus to Ottawa to rally on Parliament Hill for the recognition of the FYROM from Canada, two Aegean Macedonian immigrants called him and said: “Please, remove us from the list, because we got a call from the Greek Consulate with the threat: ‘if we see you on this bus, your relatives in Greece will have a problem.’”¹¹⁵ The thesis author also observed that even a member of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario was afraid to mention his knowledge of the Bulgarian language. Ioannis, an alias of one of the Slavic members of the Pan-Macedonian Association in Toronto started his interview with the question: “You know that Macedonia is Greece, right?”¹¹⁶ Then he declared a staunch Greek national identity and denied the existence of an ethnic Macedonian nation. Regardless of his loyalty to Greece, he looked around and only when he was sure that there was nobody else who could overhear our conversation, Ioannis whispered in fluent Bulgarian: “I speak Bulgarian, too!”¹¹⁷

It is also worth noting that, due to the Slavs who reluctantly declared a Greek identity, the Greek authorities and ethnic Greeks in Toronto have always been suspicious of the Greekness of the Slavophones. Slavic Aegean Macedonians from Kastoria illustrated

¹¹⁴ Rev. Boris Drangov, interviewed by the author, 10 May, 2007.

¹¹⁵ Dragi Stojkovski, interviewed by the author, 3 May 2007.

¹¹⁶ Ioannis (an alias), interviewed by the author, 30 May 2007.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

well this dubious attitude towards them: “We Kastorian fur-traders have always been Greeks for millennia and have always been ardent supporters of the Greek church; but the southern Greeks still call us ‘Bulgarians’; we shall never live it down.”¹¹⁸ It is rather surprising that even Jim Karas, who not only vocally and publicly declared his staunch Greek identity but also became President of the most nationalist Greek organization in Canada – the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario, was ironically asked by a Greek diplomat in Canada: “So, should I call you a Greek Macedonian or a Macedonian Greek?”¹¹⁹ Such an aggressive approach to the Slavophones might alienate from the Greek community even the Slavs from Aegean Macedonia, who voluntarily declare a Greek national identity.

During the anti-Macedonian protests of the early the 1990s in Toronto and Ottawa, regardless of the presence of Greeks from all regions of Greece, Greek Canadians from Aegean Macedonia were much more active, according to Vicky Smiaris.¹²⁰ She called the southern Greeks “selfish and concerned only with their business and trade with ‘Skopjans’ [ethnic Macedonians] and not with the Greek national interests.”¹²¹ It is quite natural, however, that the Hellenic Macedonians became more involved in the anti-Macedonian campaign of Greece, because they lived in the region and felt personally threatened and concerned with potential FYROM irredentist claims. Nevertheless, there still seems to be a general consensus by Greeks regarding Macedonia, at least among the leaders of the Greek Canadian community.

¹¹⁸ Price, *Southern Europeans*, 323.

¹¹⁹ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

¹²⁰ Vicky Smiaris, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

4.5: Ethnic Macedonians

The first immigrants who identified themselves as ethnic Macedonians and not merely as Bulgarians or Greeks from Macedonia came to Canada in the late 1950s and early 1960s.¹²² Unfortunately, Statistics Canada took more than 25 years after the arrival of the first ethnic Macedonians to Canada to include the entries ‘Macedonian-mother tongue’ and ‘Macedonian-ethnic origin’ in its census questionnaires. This led Macedonians to declare themselves as Yugoslavs on Canadian National Censuses by the 1980s.¹²³ Hence, it is hard to estimate the number of Macedonians before 1986 but it is quite likely that there were at least 2,000 Macedonians in Toronto in the early 1960s, who wanted to have their own church and cultural associations.¹²⁴ By the 1980s, the Macedonian community in Toronto became concerned with its absence on Canadian Censuses and a group of Macedonian Canadians in Toronto organized the Canadian Macedonian Census Committee in 1986.¹²⁵ The Canadian Macedonian Census Committee created publicity with its June 3rd 1986 Canada Census Day campaign and voiced its concerns to Statistics Canada representatives in Toronto. The Committee argued that there was a difference between citizenship and ethnic origin and Yugoslav was merely a civic and not an ethnonational category.¹²⁶ Thanks to this active lobbying, Statistics Canada included ‘Macedonian’ as an ethnic category and mother tongue in its 1986 Census questionnaire. 11,500 Canadians opted to choose Macedonian as their ethnic origin on the 1986 Census.¹²⁷ The overwhelming majority of them (9,945) lived in

¹²² Chimbos, *The Canadian Odyssey*, 98.

¹²³ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 414.

¹²⁴ Asen Balikci and Bonka Stoyanova-Boneva, *Balkanski Biznesmeni v Kanada: Bãlgaro-Makedonskata Etnicheska grupa kum Sredata na Veka*. [Balkan Businessmen in Canada: The Macedono-Bulgarian Ethnic Group around the Mid-20th Century] (Sofia: LIK, 1993). 9.

¹²⁵ Vasil Zigomanov, “Canadian Macedonian Census Committee Meets Federal Officials.” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 24, 15 October 1986, 1.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹²⁷ -----, *Census Canada 1986. Language: Part I* (Ottawa, Statistics Canada, 1987), 93.

Toronto.¹²⁸ It is also interesting that 1,895 Macedonian Canadians gave English as their mother tongue and 5 of them chose French as their mother tongue.¹²⁹

The 1986 Census data confirmed the author's thesis that the old pre-Cold war Macedono-Bulgarian immigrants were not interested in joining the new ethnic Macedonian community. Only 470 immigrants who came to Canada before 1946 declared themselves to be Macedonian in 1986. Meanwhile, 1,065 Macedonians stated an arrival date to Canada in the period 1946-1955, 1,905 in the period 1956-1966 and 2,760 Macedonians came to Canada in the period 1967-1977.¹³⁰ Thus, it was the new arrivals, primarily from Yugoslavia, and to a lesser extent from Aegean Macedonia, who built the ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The 1991 Canadian Census registered 12,680 Ontarians with Macedonian as their mother tongue out of 12,815 Macedonians across Canada.¹³¹ 12,035 Macedonians by ethnic origin lived in Toronto in 1991.¹³² The disintegration of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s led to a new wave of Yugoslav immigrants to Canada and thus, on the 1996 Canadian Census 19,080 respondents declared their ethnicity to be Macedonian, a number which would go up to 30,915 with multiple responses.¹³³ The significant increase of Macedonians in Canada was also followed by another trend. The new Macedonian immigrants started to settle in other parts of Canada in more significant numbers, including Montreal, Vancouver and other

¹²⁸ -----, *Census Canada 1986. Profile of Ethnic Groups: Dimensions* (Ottawa, Statistics Canada, 1987), 209.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 209.

¹³¹ -----, *1991 Census, The Nation: Mother Tongue* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1992), 18-19.

¹³² -----, *1991 Census, The Nation: Ethnic Origin* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1993), 48-9.

¹³³ -----, *1996 Census Profile of Federal Electoral Districts (1996 Representation): Aboriginal, Ethnic Origin and Visible Minorities* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1998), 9-10.

smaller cities and towns. In fact, the number of Macedonian Canadians living in Toronto even dropped slightly to 10,315 according to the 1996 Census data.¹³⁴

Between the late 1930s and the late 1950s, Bulgarian communist groups in Canada and the United States attempted to create a Macedonian ethnic community following the orders of Stalin and George Dimitrov. George Pirinsky was the main initiator of the project and he created the American Slavic Congress and the Macedonian People's League in 1931.¹³⁵ In 1938, Pirinsky became the first editor of the communist newspaper *Narodna Volya* [People's Will], which was published in Bulgarian until its last issue in 1976.¹³⁶ Pirinsky took advantage of the Second World War and the rapprochement between the West and the Soviet Union to organize a Slavic American Congress, which would urge Slavic immigrants to support Stalin and his plans for Eastern Europe.¹³⁷ After 1946, however, when the Cold War erupted and Stalin indicated again his hostility to the West, Pirinsky and his accomplices were actively observed by the FBI. Pirinsky was in constant contact with the local Communist Parties in Moscow, Sofia and Belgrade, which made him very suspicious to American and Canadian authorities. He published in *Narodna Volya/People's Will* the speeches of Georgi Dimitrov at the 5th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party in 1947 and enthusiastically supported the solution of Tito for Macedonia. The FBI gathered over 1000 pages file on the activities of Pirinsky and in 1949 he had to give an account of his activities in North America to a U.S. Senate Committee investigating communist activities among immigrants.¹³⁸ During his testimony Pirinsky acknowledged that his Macedonian

¹³⁴ -----, *1996 Census Profile of Federal Electoral Districts (1996 Representation): Age, Sex, Marital Status, Common-Law unions, Family Characteristics, Type of Dwelling and Household size, Immigration and Citizenship, and Languages* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1998), 215.

¹³⁵ Gurdev, *Bálgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 168-9.

¹³⁶ Gadjev, *Istoriya na Bálgarskata Emigraciya* [History of the Bulgarian Emigration to North America], 380.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 376-9.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 385.

League had only 500 members, which was too small to influence the Macedono-Bulgarian community. He also presented himself as an anti-Fascist and he attempted to discredit the right-wing Macedonian Political organization, describing it as a tool of the Bulgarian and German Fascists.¹³⁹ Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Pirinsky presented himself as “Macedonian by race and Yugoslav by nationality”¹⁴⁰ in Canada and the USA but his ultimate loyalty was to Stalin. After the rift between Stalin and Tito in 1948, Pirinsky had to comply with the new vision of Stalin for the Macedonian nation and thus, when The U.S. Government expelled him from the country as a communist on 2 August, 1951, Pirinsky returned to Bulgaria to join the local communist government as a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹⁴¹

After the rift between Stalin and Tito, a group of Bulgarian communists, who founded the Zagorichane Democratic Benevolent Federation in Toronto in 1947 continued to promote the idea that the Macedonians were a separate nationality in 1950s Toronto. The constitution of the benevolent federation, however, was written in Bulgarian.¹⁴² The newspaper *Makedonski glas* [Macedonian Voice], which was started in 1957 in Toronto by immigrants loyal to the Bulgarian Communist Party, also promoted the idea that Bulgarians and Macedonians were close and yet different ethnicities. The newspaper tried to help Nikita Khrushchev to improve relations with Tito. It was not hostile to Yugoslavia but it was published in standard Bulgarian. Thus, the Yugoslav consulate in Toronto was very hostile towards the *Macedonian Voice*.¹⁴³ After the clash between Stalin and Tito, Yugoslavia was very suspicious of the Bulgarian-controlled communists in Toronto, who claimed to be

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 387.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 391.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 391.

¹⁴² Constitution of the Zagorichane Democratic Benevolent Federation “Dimitar Blagoev,” 1947. [microfilm] MHSO Macedonian Collection.

¹⁴³ Gurdev, *Bălgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 192-6.

ethnic Macedonians in the 1950s but were also ready to become Bulgarians again if the orders from Moscow and Sofia changed. In his interview with Irene Markoff, Dincho Ralley illustrated well this ultimate loyalty of the Macedono-Bulgarian communists from the 1940s and 1950s to the communist ideology and not to any national sentiments. Ralley was one of the founders of the Zagorichane Democratic Benevolent Federation and the Macedonian People's League and he was born in the Aegean Macedonian village of Zagorichane. In 1977, however, during his interview, Ralley self-identified as an ethnic Bulgarian from Macedonia.¹⁴⁴

The Yugoslav government realized by the 1950s that it could not trust the older generation of pre-WWII Macedono-Bulgarian immigrants in Toronto. They were either staunch Bulgarians if they were right from the centre of the political spectrum or they were controlled by Moscow and Sofia if they were communists. Besides, none of the old generation immigrants spoke the new Macedonian language, codified in Yugoslavia in 1944. Even Professor Christina Kramer, who currently teaches Macedonian at the University of Toronto, had to recognize the inconvenient truth, admitting that: "many of the early Macedonian immigrant clubs and institutions, i.e. church, social clubs, etc were either Bulgarian identified or village identified."¹⁴⁵ Professor Krammer did not elaborate her definition of 'Macedonian' and how Bulgarian self-identified social organizations became Macedonian in her narrative and she preferred to describe the linguistic situation in a similar manner, claiming that: "Up to the nineteen sixties Macedonian language instruction in Toronto was primarily in the Bulgarian Exarchate Churches, such as Svety Kiril I Metodij

¹⁴⁴ Dincho Ralley, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 26 May 1977 (MHSO Bulgarian collection).

¹⁴⁵ Christina Krammer, "The Role of Macedonian Language in the Preservation of Ethnic Identity in Toronto," In Benjamin Stolz, ed. *Studies in Macedonian Language, Literature and Culture: Proceedings of the First North American Macedonian Conference on Macedonian Studies Ann Arbor, 1991* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1992), 102.

[sic. St. Cyril and Methody], using Bulgarian primers, supplied by the MPO (Macedonian Political Organization) of Indiana.¹⁴⁶ It is rather puzzling how a Bulgarian nationalist organization such as the MPO, which denies the existence of the Macedonian language, provided the Bulgarian Churches in Toronto with Bulgarian primers to instruct the children in Macedonian. If one reads between the lines, however, it is quite clear that Krammer simply confirms the thesis of the author that the Macedonian language and Macedonian ethnic community appeared in Toronto no earlier than the 1960s. Loring Danforth also maintains in *The Macedonian Conflict*, that the immigration of numerous Yugoslav Macedonians in the 1960s led to the emergence of a Macedonian Canadian community in Toronto.¹⁴⁷

In 1959, the Yugoslav government officially declared that the only representative of Macedonia and the Macedonians was Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁸ The authorities in Belgrade and Skopje hoped to monopolize the use of 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' for their own political goals. Thus, the Yugoslav government decided to finance the creation of an ethnic Macedonian community, which would be controlled by Belgrade and Skopje, i.e. pro-Yugoslav and it would use the new Macedonian literary language. This community had to use the new Yugoslav Macedonian immigrants to Toronto as its core but it also had to attempt to attract members from the Bulgarian community, i.e. the pre-WW II immigrants and among the Slavic-speaking Aegean Macedonians, who were part of the Greek community. Thus, by the 1960s, the Aegean Macedonians would be claimed by three ethnic communities – the Macedonian, the Greek and the Bulgarian communities.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁴⁷ Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 88.

¹⁴⁸ Asen Balikci, Asen and Bonka Stoyanova-Boneva, *Balkanski Biznesmeni v Kanada: Bãlgaro-Makedonskata Etnicheska Grupa kum Sredata na Veka*. [Balkan Businessmen in Canada: The Macedono-Bulgarian Ethnic Group around the Mid-20th Century] (Sofia: LIK, 1993), 9.

The Yugoslav project benefited from the favourable image of Yugoslavia in Canada and the West. The Canadian government regarded Yugoslavia as an anti-Soviet ally of the West, rather than a communist state, regardless of the official ideology of Tito. Bulgaria, on the other hand was an undisputable follower of the Soviet communist system and its image became very negative after the Second World War. Thus, as Vasiliadis concluded: “If a Macedonian committed to Bulgarian ethnic nationality, then he had to assume at least part of the ideology of the Bulgarian state which was no longer acceptable.”¹⁴⁹ Thus, it became much more likely that the anti-communist Slavs from Aegean Macedonia would join a Macedonian organization rather than the Bulgarian community, which was associated with communist Bulgaria or the Greek community, which was associated with oppression of the Slavic population in Aegean Macedonia.

In order to attract immigrants from the Macedonian, Bulgarian and Greek ethnic communities in Toronto, on 28 April 1959 a group of Yugoslav Macedonians together with some older communists, such as Pete James Kondoff, founded in Toronto the organization United Macedonians.¹⁵⁰ According to the Macedonian historian Tanas Vražinovski, the United Macedonians, which is the oldest ethnic Macedonian organization in Canada, was founded only to unite all Macedonians in Canada, regardless of their birthplace or political orientation and this statement was enshrined in Article 1 of its constitution.¹⁵¹ The United Macedonians Association, however, was not an independent Macedonian nationalist organization, but rather was a pro-Yugoslav organization controlled by Belgrade. One of its founders, Hristo Zavella, defected to Sofia in 1963 and he admitted that he was trained in

¹⁴⁹ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 271.

¹⁵⁰ Tanas Vražinovski, *Obedineti Makedonci* [United Macedonians] (Skopje & Melbourne: Matica Makedonska, 1998), 21.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

Belgrade for two years by the sinister Yugoslav secret service UDBA on how to organize the United Macedonians Association and how to infiltrate and divide the Bulgarian community in order to attract more members to the new organization.¹⁵²

Soon after its foundation, the United Macedonians Association started to consider the building of a Macedonian Orthodox Church in Toronto. The Macedonian historian Slave Nikolovski-Katin presented this initiative as a purely patriotic and religious deed, started by immigrants who loved Macedonia and had a strong faith in Christ.¹⁵³ In reality, however, most of the United Macedonians members were Yugoslav communists and atheists and their main goal was not religious but rather the creation of a parish church, which would attract parishioners from the three Bulgarian Orthodox Churches in the city and the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George. They also did not want new immigrants to continue to go the Bulgarian and Greek churches.¹⁵⁴ It was not surprising that the first Macedonian Orthodox Church appeared in Toronto even before the creation of a separate Macedonian Orthodox Church in Yugoslavia. The United Macedonians members organized a church committee in October 1962 and on 8 April, 1965 the first Macedonian church in North America, St. Clement of Ohrid Macedonian Orthodox Church, was consecrated.¹⁵⁵ It is worth noting that the Macedonian Orthodox Church achieved an autonomous status in the Serbian Orthodox Church in July of 1967.¹⁵⁶ The great concern of Belgrade and Skopje not to expose the new waves of Macedonian immigrants in Canada to the influence of the Bulgarian churches, whose priests preached in the prohibited in Macedonia Bulgarian language, prompted the

¹⁵² Pando Mladenov, *V Makedoniya i daleko ot neya. Spomenite mi* [In Macedonia and Away: My Memories] (Blagoevgrad: Irin-Pirin, 2005), 113-5.

¹⁵³ Slave Nikolovski-Katin, *Makedonski Iselenički Panoptikum* [Macedonian Immigrants' Panopticon] (Bitola: Drushtvo za Nauka i Umetnost, 1996), 29-30.

¹⁵⁴ Mladenov, *V Makedoniya*, 165-6.

¹⁵⁵ Nikolovski-Katin, *Makedonski Iselenički Panoptikum* [Macedonian Immigrants' Panopticon], 35.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

Yugoslav communists to create a Macedonian Orthodox Church in Canada even before its existence in Yugoslav Macedonia. In fact, Tanas Vražinovski also mentioned that there was an argument on an ideological basis between the communist hardliners and more moderate members of the United Macedonians regarding the church. During this argument Kosta Hrabrov said to another member of United Macedonians, the communist hardliner Spiro Basel: “Well, Spiro, we are called ‘United Macedonians’ to unite the people in this community space, the church, so that the people would not go to take Bulgarian baptism certificates and Bulgarian obituaries.”¹⁵⁷

With the expansion of the Macedonian community in the suburbs of Toronto, three new Macedonian Orthodox churches appeared in the GTA. St. Elijah Macedonian Orthodox Church was founded in Mississauga in 1979, St. Demetrius of Salonica Macedonian Orthodox Church was founded in Markham in 1992 and Holy Sunday Macedonian Orthodox Church was consecrated in 1993.¹⁵⁸ The Macedonian Orthodox Church parishes created after the end of the Cold War were genuinely created by Macedonian Canadian Orthodox Christians to maintain and serve their ethnic community rather than to serve the interests of Yugoslavia, which started to unravel as a state in 1991. During the Cold War, however, the Yugoslav government was ready to bend over backwards in order to secure a strong pro-Yugoslav ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto and to attract Macedono-Bulgarians and Hellenic Macedonians to this community. This Yugoslav strategy quite naturally led to conflicts with the Bulgarian and Greek communities.

Thanks to this strong Yugoslav support, the ethnic Macedonians managed to create a wide network of cultural and sports organizations and media in Toronto over the last 50

¹⁵⁷ Tanas Vražinovski, *Organizacionata struktura na Makedonskoto iseleništvo vo Kanada*. [Organizational Structure of the Macedonian Emigration to Canada] (Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1994), 106-7.

¹⁵⁸ Nikolovski-Katin, *Makedonski Iselenički Panoptikum* [Macedonian Immigrants' Panopticon], 31.

years. New immigrants from Yugoslav Macedonia started to seek membership in the village benevolent societies founded by Macedono-Bulgarians before the Second World War. Taking advantage of their larger numbers, the new wave of immigrants managed to replace the Bulgarian statutes of some of these associations with new Macedonian language statutes and to attract them to the new Macedonian community. The Vambel Benevolent Society, founded in 1940 and the Drenoveni Benevolent Association, also founded in 1940, became part of the Macedonian community in the 1950s.¹⁵⁹ The Drenoveni Benevolent Society, however, which represented a village in Aegean Macedonia, was targeted by the Greek authorities with threats that its members would be banned from visiting their relatives in Greece. Thus, the association changed its name to Drenoveni-Kraniona, which is the present Greek name of the village. This village association continues to have a pro-Macedonian and a pro-Greek faction.¹⁶⁰

Many new immigrants came from the Yugoslav Vardar Macedonia and they also created their own benevolent associations in Toronto. Former residents of the town of Bitola founded, in 1960, the Pelister Cultural-Benevolent Society.¹⁶¹ Immigrants from Prespa organized in 1961 the Prespa Benevolent Society, which changed its name in 1983 to Macedonian Benevolent Society Prespa.¹⁶² The Prilep Cultural and Educational Association was founded in 1990 by 30 families from the town of Prilep, Vardar Macedonia.¹⁶³

The Macedonian Orthodox Church of St. Clement of Ohrid became the focal point of the Macedonian community in Toronto by the 1970s. Its members formed a women's auxiliary and the first Macedonian language school in Toronto, whose program was

¹⁵⁹ Vražinovski, *Organizacionata struktura* [Organizational Structure], 51-5.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 55-6.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 51-2.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 73.

approved by the Toronto Board of Education.¹⁶⁴ In 1987, Vera Petrevska, Dragica Belchevska, Risto Miljanovski and other Macedonian Canadians formed the Literary Society Miladinov Brothers at the parish St Clement of Ohrid for the promotion and performance of Macedonian literature and poetry.¹⁶⁵ The name of the society, which is named after the 19th century writers and ardent Bulgarian nationalists from Macedonia – Dimitar Miladinov and Konstantin Miladinov – still irritate the Bulgarian nationalists in Toronto such as George Mladenov, who considers the name “a Serboman provocation.”¹⁶⁶

In 1990, members of the St. Clement of Ohrid Macedonian Orthodox Parish created their own association of retired Macedonians, called Gotse Delchev Pensioners’ Society. Only Macedonian Canadians above 55 years of age can become members of this organization.¹⁶⁷

Between 1975 and 1978, a group of Macedonian Canadians built a Canadian Macedonian Senior Citizens Centre, which houses a library with Macedonian books. In 1991, one of its founders, Pete James Kondoff, created a Canadian-Macedonian Historical Association in the Centre.¹⁶⁸ Kondoff is still interested in promoting his extreme nationalist view of Macedonian history, which according to him starts at least 4,000 years ago.¹⁶⁹

The end of the Cold War and the creation of an independent Macedonian Republic for the first time in history, in 1991, led to great nationalist pride and enthusiasm in the Macedonian Canadian diaspora. The Macedonian Canadian Human Rights Movement, which was created in 1986 in Toronto became very active in the 1990s and organized a number of initiatives for the recognition of the FYROM with its constitutional name. Its

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹⁶⁶ George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007.

¹⁶⁷ Vražinovski, *Organizacionata struktura* [Organizational Structure], 127.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹⁶⁹ Pete James Kondoff, interviewed by the author, 17 May 2007.

members also demanded more rights for the ethnic Macedonians in Greece and Bulgaria and promoted the idea that the modern Macedonian nation started its existence in Ancient Macedonia.¹⁷⁰

This rift between pro-Yugoslav communist Macedonian organizations and anti-communist Aegean Macedonian organizations and their different ideas about Macedonia started as early as the 1970s. The Yugoslav Macedonians, who were controlled by the Yugoslav government, claimed that the Macedonian nation should exist within the framework of Yugoslavia and it was only in Yugoslavia, where all Macedonians were free. The Aegean Macedonians, however never lived in Yugoslavia and they were not attached to Yugoslavism and its communist ideology. Furthermore, many of the Aegean Macedonians disliked equally both the Greeks for their oppressive policies in Aegean Macedonia and the communists. As early as 1971, a group of anti-communists seceded from the United Macedonians Association to form the Macedonian National Liberation Movement in Toronto.¹⁷¹ Article 1 of the new organization stated that the members would aspire to unite all parts of Macedonia into a united and independent Macedonian state.¹⁷² Furthermore, the Aegean Macedonians disliked the idea of the Yugoslav Macedonians that Macedonian history started with the Ilinden Uprising or with the Bulgarian rulers in the middle ages. They stated that Macedonian history started with Ancient Macedonia, which was also a way to hurt Greece. Chris Stefou (Risto Stefov), a self-identified ethnic Macedonian from Aegean Macedonia, quite openly expressed this attitude to the author. He stated that: “If the Greeks are trying to prove that there no Macedonians, my aim is to prove that there are no

¹⁷⁰ Vražinovski, *Organizacionata struktura* [Organizational Structure], 202-5.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 183-5.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 186.

Greeks.”¹⁷³ As will be demonstrated below, Stefov’s publications significantly contributed for the Greek-Macedonian conflict in Toronto.

The Association of Macedonian Veterans, created in 1983, also split into two organizations in 1989. The anti-communist faction disapproved of President Stefan Sterjovski who was also a member of the Yugoslav Canadian Veterans Association *Bratstvo I Jedinstvo* [Brotherhood and Unity].¹⁷⁴ Thus, by the late 1980s, it became clear that Yugoslavism became increasingly unpopular among many Macedonian Canadians.

The only organization which attempted to avoid the political argument in the Macedonian community was the Association of the Children Refugees from Aegean Macedonia. It was founded in Toronto in 1978 by former child refugees of the Greek Civil War, who were evacuated from Greece in the period 1947-1949.¹⁷⁵ Some members of the association, however, admitted in private conversations their anti-Yugoslav positions. An active member of the Association of Children Refugees Gjorgi Pljukovski commented after a visit to Yugoslav Macedonia in 1984 that he wished to: “open the eyes of the Macedonians in Yugoslavia and to take them out of their lethargy, because they seem to be under the influence of Yugoslavia and Yugoslavism. They need to wake up and realize that it is only a wind and a fog, it [Yugoslavism] does not exist, it is just a dream.”¹⁷⁶ And, indeed, a few years later Yugoslavia disintegrated and all organizations in the Macedonian Canadian diaspora had to accept this fact and to adapt to the new reality. United Macedonians and the smaller pro-Yugoslav organizations adapted quickly to the post-Yugoslav period and embraced the idea of independent Macedonia, which they still quite genuinely support.

¹⁷³ Risto Stefov (Chris Stefou), interviewed by the author, 12 May 2007.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 219.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 198.

Starting in the 1960s, the newly-formed Macedonian diaspora also promoted the new standard Macedonian language through a number of print media, radio and TV programs. As already mentioned, the Yugoslav consul disliked the Bulgarian language newspapers *Narodna Volya* [People's Will] and *Makedonski Glas* [Macedonian Voice], because, even though they recognized the existence of a separate Macedonian ethnicity, they were still published in Bulgarian.¹⁷⁷ Thus, one of the main goals of the United Macedonians Association was to provide the Macedonian Canadian diaspora with a newspaper in the Macedonian language. The attempts at the foundation of a reputable Macedonian newspaper were unsuccessful in the 1960s and 1970s. The members of the pro-Yugoslav group printed a number of newspapers and magazines for short periods of time in Macedonian. *Ilindenski Piknik* [Ilinden Picnic] was published in the period 1967-1978 with the logo of the United Macedonians on the front page.¹⁷⁸ *Kanadsko-Makedonski Glas* [Canadian Macedonian Voice] (1979-1980), *Makedonski Glas* [Macedonian Voice] (1980-1981) and *United Macedonians/Obedineti Makedonci* (1988-1989), all published in Toronto, were also part of the effort of the United Macedonians to establish a Macedonian Canadian newspaper.¹⁷⁹ The anti-communist Macedonian National Liberation Movement was even less successful than the Macedonian communists, since its newspaper *Makedonska Vistina* [Macedonian Truth] was released only in two issues in 1974.¹⁸⁰ The first Macedonian Orthodox Church of St. Clement of Ohrid was a little more successful with its bulletin *Klimentov Zbor* [Clement's Word], which was published in Toronto in the period 1972-1988.¹⁸¹ A newspaper which would finally succeed in winning over the Macedonian Canadians in Toronto and to build a

¹⁷⁷ Gurdev, *Balgarskata Emigraciya* [The Bulgarian Emigration], 192-6.

¹⁷⁸ Slave Nikolovski-Katin, *Makedonski Iselenički Pečat (1945-1992)* [The Macedonian Immigrants' Press (1945-1992)] (Skopje: NIO "Studentski Zbor," 1993), 126.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 42, 145.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 127.

good reputation was *Makedonija/Macedonia*. It was started in 1984 by Tanas Jovanovski and it is still published in Macedonian by the same editor as a monthly.¹⁸²

The monthly magazine *Koreni* [Roots], published in Toronto since 1991 is another publication that still attracts the attention of the Macedonian diaspora. So does the one-hour TV program on OMNI 1 *Makedonski Koreni/Macedonian Heritage*, and a few Macedonian language radio programs.¹⁸³ Nevertheless, the use of the Macedonian language is in decline in Toronto. The older immigrants never spoke and wrote in this new Macedonian standard language, since they were educated in Bulgarian and the second generation immigrants started to assimilate. Alexander Thomas Gulin, a reader of the *Makedonija/Macedonia* monthly even wrote a letter to the editor in 1995 to criticize the extensive use of the Macedonian language in the newspaper. According to him, Alexander was born in 1960 in Toronto and was very proud of his Macedonian heritage, but then he continued: “You, people at the newspaper missed the boat. Message? The future is now the ENGLISH LANGUAGE.”¹⁸⁴ Mr. Gulin even claimed that the newspaper could not call itself ‘The Macedonian Voice of North America’ if it did not switch to English.¹⁸⁵

The linguistic assimilation into the English-language sea of Ontario is a very likely scenario for the future of the ethnic Macedonian community and their linguistic preferences will probably continue to divide the first and second generation Macedonian Canadians. The end of the Cold War brought an almost unanimous position over the Macedonian identity, since all ethnic Macedonian organizations support the new independent state FYROM. Nevertheless, political and regional divisions still exist in the community. The attempts of

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 155-60.

¹⁸⁴ Alexander Thomas Gulin, Letter to the Editor: “We Missed the Boat,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 132, 15 October 1995, 2.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

the Macedonian organizations to attract members from the Bulgarian and Greek communities to the Macedonian side, as well as the new nationalist interpretations of Macedonian history, would eventually lead to an acute conflict between the Macedonian Canadian and the Hellenic Canadian communities and to a lesser extent with the Bulgarian Canadian organizations. The next chapter will describe these conflicts.

CHAPTER 5

SEEDS OF THE CONFLICT: DIASPORIC VISIONS OF MACEDONIAN-NESS

5.1: Voices from the Ethnic Macedonian Community

The main organizations of all three ethnic communities in Toronto involved in the conflict over Macedonian heritage and identity attempted to present their positions as almost an article of faith to which everybody in their community adhered. However, the various political, religious and generational cleavages in each community also led to different views on Macedonia and Macedonians. Oral history is quite valuable in such circumstances, because it allows the researcher to capture various incoherent views in the community, which do not necessarily comply with the official position of the community leaders. For the purpose of this thesis, oral history is “the recording of personal testimony delivered in oral form.”¹ The purpose of the twenty-two taped interviews conducted by the author, or by the anthropologist Irene Markoff, was not a quantitative study or simply acquiring personal narratives about historical events. The main purpose of these oral accounts was a qualitative study, which could indicate how homogenous or heterogeneous the views were in each ethnic community about historical figures, events and organizations related to Macedonia. The oral accounts could also demonstrate how different informants self-identified on ethnic and national levels and how they perceived the concepts of ethnic and national identity. These oral accounts contributed significantly to the author’s understanding and analysis of some of the roots and causes of the clash over Macedonian identity in Toronto. All the

¹ Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. Second Edition (New York-Toronto-Oxford: Alta Mira Press, 2005), 3.

interviews contributed to various parts of the thesis but in this chapter the author included only interviews of informants who were actively involved in the diaspora activities and ethnocultural organizations of the three Balkan communities in Toronto.

The informants, who self-identified as ethnic Macedonians, had very different perceptions of Macedonia, Macedonian identity and the concepts of ethnicity and nation. Pete James Kondoff² expressed the most extreme nationalist views, followed by Risto Stefov,³ who also uses the name Chris Stefou. Dragi Stojkovski,⁴ even as President of the United Macedonians Organizations of Canada, demonstrated more moderate views, whereas Tanas Jovanovski⁵ was very liberal and respectful towards the right of national self-identification of the immigrants with Macedonian roots. Yoto Mousmanis⁶ and his wife were a rare example of pre-war immigrants, who joined the Macedonian community after the 1960s, regardless of the fact that they never learned the newly codified Macedonian language and they continued to use Bulgarian and English. The last informant, who preferred to use the alias Thomas,⁷ was an example of a totally apolitical person for whom the Macedonian identity was merely a convenient way to legally stay in Canada.

Pete James Kondoff was the oldest informant who contributed to this thesis. He was born in 1918 in Detroit, and moved to Canada in 1955.⁸ Mr. Kondoff is a native speaker of English and his knowledge of Bulgarian/Macedonian is rudimentary. In the early 1940s, he met George Pirinsky, whom he called a “Bulgarian friend of mine.”⁹ This “Bulgarian friend”, however, was the same person mentioned in the previous chapter who was working for the

² Pete James Kondoff, interviewed by the author, 17 May 2007.

³ Risto Stefov (Chris Stefou), interviewed by the author, 12 May 2007.

⁴ Dragi Stojkovski, interviewed by the author, 3 May 2007.

⁵ Tanas Jovanovski, editor of *Makedonija*, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

⁶ Yoto Mousmanis, interviewed by the author, 7 June 1977 (MHSO Collection).

⁷ Thomas (an alias), interviewed by the author, 14 June, 2007.

⁸ Pete James Kondoff, interviewed by the author, 17 May 2007.

⁹ *Ibid.*

creation of a Macedonian community under communist control in North America and thus, he was eventually expelled by the U.S. government in 1951.¹⁰ Kondoff did not go into detail about the activities of Pirinsky and his changing national identities depending on the orders of the Communist Parties in Moscow and Sofia but it was obvious that Pirinsky influenced Kondoff to accept both a Macedonian ethnic identity and the communist ideology. It seemed to the author, however, that after so many years of reflection, Kondoff almost created a new socialist ideology. He described himself as a “Marxist Christian, who does not believe in God but likes Christian philosophy.”¹¹

Kondoff’s ideas about nationalism and Macedonian identity were no less interesting than his political beliefs. Despite his technical education and engineering degree, Mr. Kondoff professed a great interest in history and in 1989 he founded the Macedonian History Society in Toronto. He was also a founding member of the United Macedonians Organization, its executive secretary in the period 1960-1970 and a founding member of the St. Clement of Ohrid First Macedonian Orthodox Church, regardless of his atheism. Following the old communist view of nationalism, Kondoff presented himself as an “internationalist” but his ideas were far from international communism.¹²

Kondoff firmly believed that Macedonians were the oldest nationality in the Balkans with 4,000 years of history and that Macedonian culture was the most influential culture, not only in the Balkans, but also across Europe. To him, ‘nation’ and ‘nationality’ were primordial characteristics which could never change in time and space. He was persuaded that there was a direct continuity and relation between the ancient and the modern

¹⁰ Ivan Gadjev, *Istoriya na Bâlgarskata Emigraciya v Severna Amerika: Bâlgariya, Mashteha Nasha (1944-1989)*, Vol. II [History of the Bulgarian Emigration to North America: Bulgaria: Our Stepmother (1944-1989), Vol. 2] (Goce Delchev: Institute for the History of the Bulgarian Emigration to North America “Iliya Todorov Gadjev,” 2006), 391.

¹¹ Pete James Kondoff, interviewed by the author, 17 May 2007.

¹² *Ibid.*

Macedonians, including linguistic and cultural continuity. Kondoff demonstrated nationalist views which went to the very extreme and bordered on science fiction. He was quite fascinated with Alexander of Macedon and he insisted on talking about Alexander and his Empire for most of the interview. Pete James Kondoff claimed that there were still descendants of the soldiers of Alexander of Macedon in the Hunza Valley of Pakistan, who used about 100 ancient Macedonian words and these words were supposedly present in the modern Macedonian language.¹³ He could not explain how words of the lost vocabulary of the Hellenic speakers of Alexander's army penetrated into modern Macedonian, which is a Slavic language with an almost identical vocabulary with the Bulgarian standard language.

Kondoff had, however, even more extreme views on the ancient Macedonian influence on Slavic and other European cultures. This informant claimed that the Russians, Bulgarians and all other Slavic nations had colourful patterns on their folk costumes, and particularly on their shirts, thanks to the Macedonians who passed on this tradition. "Remember," he argued "Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, it was all Macedonia during Alexander's times all the way to India."¹⁴ It was obvious that he did not have a good perception of the exact boundaries of the ancient Hellenic Macedonian Empire of Alexander. He went even further to maintain that the Vikings also sent expeditions to the ancient Macedonians and they were also influenced by the Macedonian culture, regardless of the fact that the Vikings did not exist until the early medieval period in Europe. Kondoff also argued that the Scottish Celts were on the northern borders of the Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great and thus, four important elements in Scottish culture, namely the clan, the kilt, the

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

bagpipe and the lion, were borrowed by the Scots from the Macedonians.¹⁵ This was another absurd statement with no grounds but Kondoff continued to present his beliefs and imagination as historical facts. Probably his most preposterous argument, however, was that “indirectly, the Macedonian culture influenced the building of the Great Wall of China and the French Revolution.”¹⁶ And Kondoff genuinely believed in his view of history.

Despite the fact that ancient Macedonians did not exist in the 9th century AD, Kondoff finished his pseudo-historical narrative with the claim that the Greeks were so annoyed and jealous of the existence of a strong Macedonian national identity in the 9th century AD that they decided to invent a Bulgarian nation in the mid-9th century and a Bulgarian Orthodox Church in order to counter and destroy the Macedonian identity but he concluded that “this was an impossible task, because the Macedonian identity was too strong to be eliminated.”¹⁷ In a complete contradiction of his previous statement, Kondoff maintained that there was no Greek nation before 1821. He commented that modern Greece had nothing to do with ancient Greece, whereas the Macedonians managed to endure from antiquity up until the present.¹⁸ His double standard was quite obvious. In Kondoff’s view nations were invented centuries after the Macedonian nation and it was only the Macedonian nation which managed to flourish across time and space and to influence all other neighbouring nations.

Kondoff declined to talk about the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) and the language of its documents, which was Bulgarian, and he preferred to talk about the ancient Macedonians and Alexander the Great instead. He maintained, however,

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

that all Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Churches in Toronto were Macedonian and were built by immigrants with Macedonian ethnic identity. He also presented Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church as the first Macedonian church in Toronto, despite the fact that this cathedral has always served only the Bulgarian community. Kondoff also challenged the Bulgarian and Greek views of Balkan history and boldly stated: “You can bring any Bulgarian or Greek historian to discuss history and I will defeat them because all their arguments are nonsense!”¹⁹

In striking contrast with his nationalist views, Kondoff argued that immigrants had to assimilate and to him, assimilation was a natural process. In his view, however, assimilation meant primarily linguistic integration.²⁰

Risto Stefov, who also uses the name Chris Stefou, because he was born in Aegean Macedonia, considers himself a professional historian, who actively publishes historical articles and books on Macedonian history.²¹ Mr. Stefou is fluent in both English and Macedonian and he also went to nationalist extremes. Stefou self-published the book *History of the Macedonian People from Ancient Times to the Present* (Toronto: Risto Stefov Publications, 2005) and it is available in the history section of the University of Toronto Robarts Library. However, the speculations published in this book are more appropriate for the fiction section. Stefov argued that “Although the surviving vocabulary of the ancient Macedonians is relatively small, it gives a good indication in favour of our thesis, which is that the modern Macedonian language is at least in part the continuation of the language spoken by Alexander the Great and his contemporaries.”²² Stefou could not support his claim

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Risto Stefov (Chris Stefou), interviewed by the author, 12 May 2007.

²² Chris Stefou, *History of the Macedonian People from Ancient Times to the Present* (Toronto: Risto Stefov Publications, 2005), 15.

with any sources, but this fact did not prevent him from continuing that: “The Greek City States took the mythology from the Ancient Macedonians. Even the word “mythology” comes from the ancient Macedonian words “mit” and “log.”²³ Such groundless speculations provoke the Greek community in Toronto to continue to be hostile to the Macedonians. Stefou, however, did not forget to challenge the Bulgarian community as well, claiming that it is not correct to argue that Macedonians speak a Bulgarian dialect but it is “more correctly [to say that] the Bulgarians speak a dialect of the Macedonian language, not the other way around.”²⁴ Following Chris Stefou’s logic, it would be possible to maintain that Hans Christian Andersen borrowed *The Little Mermaid* from the Disney film and that the English speak an American dialect. Balkan history, however, is almost *terra incognita* in Canada and hence, Risto Stefov probably hoped that his speculations would not be challenged by Canadian historians.

Risto Stefov decided to turn his negative sentiments towards Greece into a personal vendetta against Greek identity and history. During our interview, he boldly stated: “If they say that there are no Macedonians, I am going to say that there are no Greeks! And it is true! The Greek identity is artificial! It is created in the 19th century. Before that there were neither Greeks, nor Greek language and culture, there were only Macedonians, Albanians, Vlachs and Turks.”²⁵ Thus, exactly as Kondoff, Risto Stefov argued that the Greeks and all other neighbouring nations were artificial except the Macedonians, who almost started with Adam and Eve. It was also obvious that all historians around the world live in darkness and admire Greek history and culture and they are not aware that Greek history, language and culture never existed before the 19th century, when supposedly “the Great Powers created the Greek

²³ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁵ Risto Stefov (Chris Stefou), interviewed by the author, 12 May 2007.

nation,” as Stefou claimed.²⁶ Despite the fact that he could not cite even one reputable primary source to support his arguments, Stefov confidently blamed the Greeks, stating that: “Everything the Greeks say is a lie, only lies, nothing else but lies!”²⁷ Unfortunately to him, in the academic world historians tend to look into primary sources and various points of view and it appears that outside the FYROM and self-proclaimed professional historians of Macedonian descent virtually no historian supports the Macedonian pseudo-historical speculations, which confuse nationalist emotions with historical facts.

Risto Stefov gave a much more interesting account of the Aegean Macedonians of Slavic origin who opted for joining the Greek community in Toronto or the so called *Grkomani*. Stefov maintained that there were two groups of *Grkomani*. The first group is made of common people, who are afraid of negative consequences if they leave the Greek community and thus, they pledge a symbolic allegiance to it but they would not get involved in any political activity and they always preferred to be neutral and to keep a low profile. Stefov classified the second group as collaborators. These people had always been loyal to the Greeks and they proved their loyalty with anti-Macedonian activities such as listing the pro-Greek and anti-Greek residents in the villages and so on. These collaborators became very active in the Pan-Macedonian Association and the Greek village societies and they want to hide their secrets and origin, Stefov argues.²⁸ Thus, Stefov considers the Slavs who chose to identify as Greeks as traitors to Macedonia.

Surprisingly, Dragi Stojkovski, the President of the most nationalist ethnic Macedonian organization in Canada, the *United Macedonians*, appeared to be much more moderate than both Pete James Kondoff and Risto Stefov. Stojkovski was born in 1955 in

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Skopje, the capital of the Yugoslav People's Republic of Macedonia. He moved to Canada in 1970 as a fifteen year-old.²⁹ As a representative of an organization which is actively involved in ethnic community life in Toronto, Stojkovski concentrated on the history of the Macedonian immigration to Toronto, rather than on ancient Greek history.

Dragi Stojkovski gave a very intriguing response to the issue of the number of Macedonian Canadians in Toronto. He noted that, since the majority of the first Macedonian immigrants to Toronto came from Aegean Macedonia in the early 1900s, they came with Turkish passports and later waves of immigrants started to come with Greek, Bulgarian or Yugoslav passports. Stojkovski argued that: "Most people on censuses will say 'I am Greek or Yugoslav,' because of their citizenship, without realizing that ethnicity is different."³⁰ This argument seems to be very close to the truth but, as the author already demonstrated, none of these immigrants were so confused as to declare Turkish nationality regardless of their passports and most of these immigrants knew well what their language and ethnicity were. Nevertheless, dismissing the choice of some Macedonians to declare a Greek identity only due to fear, and the Canadian identity and English native tongue of many third and fourth generation immigrants, Dragi Stojkovski estimated that currently, there were at least 120,000 Macedonians in Toronto.³¹

Regarding the Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Churches, he also argued that they were built by Macedonians and thus, they were Macedonian and only the priests were Bulgarians. The founder of the third Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Holy Trinity, however, Reverend Vasil Mihailoff was born in Macedonia and continued to proclaim a fervent Bulgarian nationalism in the 1970s, when there was already a Macedonian Orthodox

²⁹ Dragi Stojkovski, interviewed by the author, 3 May 2007.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

Church in Toronto – St. Clement of Ohrid.³² The current priests of the other two Macedonian-Bulgarian Churches, St. George and Sts. Cyril and Methody, were also born in geographic Macedonia, but both Rev. Boris Drangov and Rev. Valeri Shumarov declared themselves to be Bulgarian by ethnicity and nationality.³³ Thus, another seemingly plausible argument of the Macedonian ethnic community was shattered by the existing evidence.

Dragi Stojkovski also believed that Macedonian history started in antiquity but in sharp contrast to Kondoff and Stefou, he focused his efforts on lobbying for the recognition of the Macedonian nation and state as they currently exist. He also believed in the importance of preserving the old country language and culture as a prerequisite for the existence of the ethnic Macedonian community.³⁴ Even though Dragi Stojkovski was more moderate in his nationalist fervour, he also admitted implicitly his double standard. On the one hand, he criticized the Greek policy of imposition of Hellenism in Aegean Macedonia and yet, Stojkovski attempted to impose Macedonian nationalism and argued with immigrants with Slavic names that they were not Greeks, Bulgarians or Canadians but Macedonians.³⁵

The editor of the most popular newspaper among the ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto, *Makedonija/Macedonia*, Tanas Jovanovski, demonstrated the most moderate and liberal positions among the prominent figures of the Macedonian diaspora in Toronto. Mr. Jovanovski was born in the Vardar Macedonian village of Braichino in 1941 and he moved to Canada in 1968. Despite the fact that he came from the FYROM and was eager to participate actively in Macedonian community activities, he developed a very tolerant view

³² Rev. Vasil Mihailoff, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 7 February 1977.

³³ Rev. Boris Drangov, interviewed by the author, 10 May 2007; Rev. Valeri Shumarov, interviewed by the author, 15 May 2007.

³⁴ Dragi Stojkovski, interviewed by the author, 3 May 2007.

³⁵ Dragi Stojkovski, interviewed by the author, 3 May 2007.

of nationalism and ethnic identity. He also criticized the Greek policies on the FYROM and the people who dared to express publicly their Macedonian national identity and yet, Mr. Jovanovski opposed the imposition of any national identity.³⁶ Tanas Jovanovski was the only Macedonian informant who accepted official Canadian statistics, which indicated that there were only about 30,000 Macedonian Canadians. Jovanovski noted that everybody should respect the choice of the others. He believed that in a democratic country such as Canada “we cannot say to someone who says, ‘I am Bulgarian, Greek or just Canadian’, ‘no, you are Macedonian! In the new world, you are who you say you are!’”³⁷ Mr. Jovanovski believed that the choice of national identity must not be imposed by anyone but it should be dictated by one’s personal choice and preferences. Such an approach to national identity could have prevented many ethnic conflicts worldwide but, unfortunately, few people share Jovanovski’s ideas.

Despite the extreme nationalist passion for history among some members of the Macedonian diaspora in the GTA, however, it would be a mistake to assume that most ethnic Macedonians in Toronto are so actively involved in the Macedonian conflict. In fact, as the author observed, Tanas Jovanovski also confirmed that less than one percent of the Macedonians actively participate in Macedonian ethnic associations and community events and initiatives.³⁸

There were also some pre-war Bulgarian immigrants from Macedonia, who joined the Macedonian community but they failed to talk extensively about politics and their national identity. Yoto Mousmanis, born in 1900 in the village of Dambeni, Aegean Macedonia was one of these early immigrants. He was interviewed in 1977 in Bulgarian and English by Irene

³⁶ Tanas Jovanovski, editor of *Makedonija*, interviewed by the author, 6 June, 2007.

³⁷ Tanas Jovanovski, editor of *Makedonija*, interviewed by the author, 6 June, 2007.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Markoff.³⁹ He spoke standard Bulgarian and he used 'Bulgarian' and 'Macedonian' as a language or nationality interchangeably during the interview. He did not seem to be concerned with any political issues. Mousmanis concentrated on the functioning of the Dambeni Benevolent Society, which was founded in 1946 to support former villagers from Dambeni. Yoto and his wife were actively involved in the benevolent society and they managed to persuade their son Nick to take over the administration of the benevolent society in 1978.⁴⁰

Another interesting case of a publicly expressed Macedonian identity was the story of Thomas, which was the alias of a Bulgarian immigrant from Pirin Macedonia. Thomas came to Canada in 1992 with the infamous Cuban flights from Bulgaria to Newfoundland. He decided to claim refugee status and, since he was from southwestern Bulgaria, Thomas was advised to maintain that he had a Macedonian ethnic identity and because of it he was persecuted by the Bulgarian authorities. His story was compelling enough to gain refugee status and later Canadian citizenship but he never got involved in the Macedonian community.⁴¹ Thomas is still not interested in ethnic politics. To him, claiming a Macedonian identity was simply an opportunity to stay in Canada.

Despite the general passivity of the Macedonian diaspora, however, the few nationalists who are actively involved and constantly publish and express publicly their views on Macedonian themes, such as Risto Stefov and Pete James Kondoff, manage to provoke the national sentiments of the Greek and Bulgarian communities. These nationalists also attempt to speak on behalf of the whole Macedonian community even if they have never been authorized with this responsibility.

³⁹ Yoto Mousmanis, interviewed by Irene Markoff, 7 June 1977 (MHSO Collection).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Thomas (an alias), interviewed by the author, 14 June, 2007.

5.2: Hellenic Macedonian Voices

The Hellenic Macedonians in Toronto are also very sensitive to the subject of Greek history and Macedonian heritage and the active members of the Greek community resented the ethnic Macedonian attempts to appropriate Greek history and heritage. The Greeks were also very suspicious of the author due to his Slavic name and South Slavic accent and it was very difficult to find community members who were ready, not only to talk about the Macedonian conflict, but also to be taped and quoted in this thesis. The interviews with the Hellenic Macedonians revealed three important issues. The informants expressed their hostility, not only against appropriations and falsifications of Greek history, but also towards any use of ‘Macedonia’ and ‘Macedonian’ by non-Greeks which prevents a reasonable dialogue between the two communities. Secondly, the internal community rifts between northern and southern Greek immigrants and left-wing vs. right-wing immigrants were quite obvious and thirdly, the ethnic Greeks from Aegean Macedonia and elsewhere still distrusted the Slavophone Greeks even if they fervently expressed their Greekness.

Vicky Smiaris, an ethnic Greek from Salonica, Aegean Macedonia, who is actively involved in the activities of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario, expressed the concerns of the right-wing Hellenic Macedonian immigrants.⁴² Initially, she was very suspicious of the author, assuming that he might work for the FYROM government. Even to some of the initial questions, such as ‘When did Pan-Makedoniki (the Pan-Macedonian Association) open branches in Canada?’ Mrs. Smiaris answered with: “Why do you need to know that?”⁴³ Once she realized that the author’s task was to present all viewpoints on the

⁴² Vicky Smiaris, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Macedonian conflict, rather than to report his findings in Skopje, she readily shared her opinions. The father of Mrs. Smiaris served in the Greek army during the Greek Civil War (1944-1949) and she was brought up with his memories and anti-communist ideas. Vicky Smiaris firmly believed that only Greeks could use the terms 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' as part of their identity. She proudly stated: "I am Macedonian, but I am a Hellenic Macedonian!"⁴⁴ According to Smiaris, the Yugoslav Macedonian propaganda in Greece was spread during the Greek Civil War by Yugoslav agents who crossed the porous borders after the War. Bulgarian communists also used the poorly-controlled border to funnel weapons to the Greek communists. Yugoslav propaganda radicalized the Slavs and, influenced by it, once in Toronto many of the immigrants from Aegean Macedonia after the Second World War started to promote a Slavic Macedonian identity in the 1960s. As a staunch supporter of the Greek government position, Mrs. Smiaris refused to call a non-Greek community 'Macedonian' and she referred to the ethnic Macedonians in Toronto as "Skopjans."⁴⁵ As the Greek government, she denied not only the existence of a separate Macedonian ethnicity in the past, but also the right of the Slavic population of Macedonia to have a separate Macedonian ethnicity now. Mrs. Smiaris noted that the "Skopjans" managed to attract to their side American and Canadian politicians, because their government gave enormous sums of money for propaganda.⁴⁶ This claim was one of the most often used by all three ethnic communities for the other two communities.

Much more interesting, however, was the opinion of Smiaris on the internal Greek community rifts. She claimed that there was a huge divide between northern and southern Greeks. Mrs. Smiaris argued that "only people from the North care about Macedonia,

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

because our fathers and grandfathers fought in the Civil War, not the southerners.”⁴⁷ It is an overstatement to claim that the Greeks from the South are not concerned with the Macedonian question, because the FYROM attacked a number of important Greek national symbols and historic figures but indeed, the Greeks from Aegean Macedonia seem to be much more passionate about the Macedonian issue, since they live in the area and face anti-Greek rhetoric from the FYROM on a daily basis. Mrs. Smiaris also blamed the southern Greeks for putting their business interests above Greek national interests, since many southern Greek entrepreneurs started to do business with the FYROM in the early 1990s.⁴⁸

Due to the attacks on Greek historical symbols and figures by the ethnic Macedonians in Toronto, Vicky Smiaris defined the conflict between the Macedonian and Greek communities as “substantial and irreconcilable.”⁴⁹ She also blamed the left-wing Greek immigrants and even the President of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario, Jim Karas, as pro-Skopje and not firm enough when dealing with the Macedonian community in Toronto. Her biggest concern was the use of the name ‘Macedonia’ by the FYROM and FYROM immigrants in Toronto. Smiaris, however, firmly stated that the Greek Canadians “will never allow them [the Macedonians] to use the name Macedonia.”⁵⁰ Thus, for Smiaris the biggest issue in the conflict between the Macedonian and Greek communities in Toronto was who should have a monopoly on the use of the name Macedonia.

Dr. Jim Karas agreed with Vicky Smiaris that there was an ongoing conflict between the Greek and Macedonian communities in Toronto.⁵¹ The author asked Dr. Karas to express his personal views on the issue and he kindly agreed to do so. Jim Karas was born in the

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

village of Armenohori, near Florina, Aegean Macedonia in a family of Slavic origin, who considered themselves Greek. Jim Karas acknowledged that he could speak Bulgarian and he did speak it with the author, but he also noted that his family chose not to join the Bulgarian Orthodox Church after its reinstatement in 1870 and his forefathers had always been members of the Greek Patriarchy.⁵² Thus, he is a member of the Hellenic Macedonian group of Slavic origin or the so-called Slavophones and Patriarchists, who are still considered traitors by both the Bulgarian and Macedonian communities and designated by the derogatory term *Grkomans*.

Dr. Karas noted that many Slavophones were disappointed by the Greek authorities in the past. They did not have the right to occupy prominent positions in the community as teachers, lawyers or army officers and thus, when they came to Canada or Australia they did not want to have anything to do with the Greek community. Therefore, even as President of the Pan-Makedoniki, Dr. Jim Karas could understand the sentiments of the Slavophone immigrants, who were anti-Greek.⁵³ He also demonstrated that on a personal level, it is possible for a Macedonian nationalist to be friendly with a Greek nationalist. Dr. Karas revealed his respect for his childhood friend Tely Moriovche. Tely was born in the same village of Armenohori as Jim Karas and lived merely 100 meters from Karas' house. The father of Moriovche was killed by Greek nationalists and his mother was mistreated by the Greek authorities, according to Karas.⁵⁴ Once he came to Canada, Tely Moriovche expressed extreme anti-Greek sentiments and even became president of the Macedonian nationalist organization United Macedonians in 1976-1977. Mr. Moriovche is still in the board of directors of St. Clement of Ohrid First Macedonian Orthodox Church for 2006-2008 as

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Tanas Jovanovski mentioned during his interview.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Dr. Karas noted that Tely “is a gentleman and I cannot say anything bad about him.”⁵⁶ To prevent any bitter feelings when they meet each other, Tely preferred to speak to Jim in English but Dr. Karas, regardless of his position in the Greek community, always answered back in the local Slavic dialect of Armenohori. He even attended the wedding of Tely Moriovche’s daughter at the Macedonian Orthodox Church of St. Clement.⁵⁷ The relationship between Tely Moriovche, a former president of the United Macedonians and Dr. Jim Karas, current president of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario is a good example for other members of both ethnic communities. Unfortunately, such a warm friendship is an exception. Such friendships, however, make extreme Greek nationalists, such as Vicky Smiaris, suspect the loyalty of Karas to the Greek cause, regardless of his firm attachment to the Greek community.⁵⁸

In a number of cases, however, it is not only neighbours from the same village, who chose to join a different ethnic group, but also sons and fathers and two sisters or two brothers clashed with each other due to their ethnic loyalties. The Italian anthropologist Piero Vereni described the case of Leonidas Christopoulos, a Slavophone from Aegean Macedonia, whose paternal grandparents self-identified as Bulgarians, whereas his maternal grandparents self-identified as Greeks. Regardless of her parents’ Greek identity, Leonidas’ mother Stavroula self-identified as Bulgarian and Leonidas’ father Georgos father also disappointed his pro-Bulgarian parents and identified with the Greek nation and ethnicity. Leonidas also surprised his relatives and chose to identify with another ethnicity. He did not choose the Bulgarian or the Greek identity but instead, he self-identified as an ethnic

⁵⁵ Tanas Jovanovski, editor of *Makedonija*, interviewed by the author, 6 June, 2007.

⁵⁶ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Vicky Smiaris, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

Macedonian.⁵⁹ Such cases of ethnic identity shifts create severe family conflicts and also fuel the suspicion of Greek authorities of their Slavophone citizens' loyalty. The common belief in the Balkans that ethnic identity is something fixed in time and space that never evolves prevents the full integration and acceptance of Slavophones in Aegean Macedonia who chose to embrace the Greek ethnicity. Even Jim Karas, who is actively involved in the Greek ethnic community and has always declared his Greek national identity, was ironically asked by a Greek diplomat in Ottawa: "So, should I call you a Greek Macedonian or a Macedonian Greek?"⁶⁰ Such ironic remarks do not contribute to the full integration of Aegean Macedonian Slavs, who chose to join the Greek ethnic community. This constant suspicion towards the Slavophone loyalty to Greece has pushed into the Macedonian ethnic community a number of Aegean Macedonians and it is one of the reasons for the ongoing Macedonian conflict. Nevertheless, according to Jim Karas, currently the Slavophone Greeks have full civil rights in Greece, they are linguistically assimilated except the older people and they are not barred from taking any public service positions. Due to past mistreatments, however, the President of Pan-Makedoniki noted that the bastion of Macedonian nationalism is not in Greece or Skopje but rather in Toronto and Melbourne.⁶¹

According to Dr. Karas, "the real problem with FYROMians is their obsession with irredentism. They want 1/3 of Greece. This is absurd!"⁶² Detached from reality, both in Skopje and in Toronto and Melbourne, Macedonian nationalists claim that Aegean Macedonia is populated by Macedonian-speaking ethnic Macedonians. But Karas noted that

⁵⁹ Piero Vereni, "Os Ellin Makedonas: Autobiography, Memory and National Identity in Western Greek Macedonia" In Jane K. Cowan, ed. *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference* (London: Pluto Press, 2000), 60-1.

⁶⁰ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

“only in the northwest, the old Greeks speak Slavic, even though they can’t write a word. The young generation speak Greek only.”⁶³

The other issue is the appropriation of Greek and Bulgarian history, which is also unacceptable in Karas’ view. He noted that: “Probably [King] Samuel is turning in his grave to hear that he was not Bulgarian.”⁶⁴ Regarding the Macedonian arguments on history, the informant did not want to comment because he considered these arguments to be quite unrealistic. Thus, it was clear that currently the Bulgarian and Greek communities in Toronto were united against a common enemy– the ethnic Macedonian nationalists, even though the conflict with the Greeks seemed to be much more acute. Dr. Karas complained that all Greek celebrations and parades in Toronto, usually in October and March, were disrupted by anti-Greek FYROM demonstrations in front of the Greek consulate with placards ‘Justice to the Macedonians’ and similar slogans and FYROM flags. Hence, Dr. Karas argued that the Macedonian conflict became more severe when the mob mentality started to direct their emotions and during such demonstrations ethnic pride led to clashes and physical violence.⁶⁵ The author also noted that the personal nationalist battles usually happened on the pages of the ethnic media rather than on the street, whereas mass Greek or Macedonian demonstrations in the 1990s inevitably led to Greek-Macedonian clashes in Toronto.

Dr. Jim Karas not only expressed freely his views on the Macedonian conflict but he also mentioned his Slavic origin and knowledge of the Bulgarian language without any fear or embarrassment. The other Slavophone informant who agreed to be interviewed, however, was much more timid and cautious. Ioannis, an alias, which he chose, was born in Kilkis, Aegean Macedonia in a Slavophone Patriarchist family. Thus, when he came to Canada in

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

the 1970s, he continued to publicly express his Greek national identity and he joined the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario.⁶⁶ Initially, he started to persuade the author that Macedonia was an integral part of Greece, regardless of the fact that the author had never challenge this argument. “You know that Macedonia is Greece, right?”⁶⁷ Ioannis denied the existence of a separate Macedonian ethnicity, repeating the Greek and Bulgarian traditional arguments that the Macedonian nation was invented by Tito to counter Bulgarian irredentist claims.⁶⁸ When Ioannis understood that the author is of Bulgarian origin, only then did he suddenly reveal his Slavic origin and then he looked around to make sure that there were no other people around and whispered in Bulgarian: “I speak Bulgarian, too!”⁶⁹ Surprised by this sudden confession, the author asked him in English about his native place. Ioannis answered back in Bulgarian again: “I am from Kukush.”⁷⁰ Kukush is the Bulgarian name of the Aegean Macedonian town of Kilkis, which has been a part of Greece since the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and Greeks usually avoid referring to Kilkis with its Bulgarian name. From then on, Ioannis continued spontaneously the interview in Bulgarian and even raised his voice, even though the interview took place in the lobby of the Pan-Macedonian Association building on Danforth Street in Toronto, which meant that a Greek could pass by at any time. When Ioannis heard someone climbing up the stairs, he immediately switched back to English. The person who came in was the President of the association, Dr. Jim Karas. After Dr. Karas left, Ioannis again looked around to make sure that he would not be overheard and whispered in Bulgarian, as if he revealed another secret: “The President... he

⁶⁶ Ioannis (an alias), interviewed by the author, 30 May 2007.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

speaks Bulgarian as well!”⁷¹ In fact, it was not a secret, since Dr. Karas quite openly admitted his Slavic heritage and yet the behaviour of Ioannis was quite revealing. It was an implicit indication that there was still intimidation and pressure on the Slavophones by the Greek authorities and diaspora to avoid mentioning their Slavic origin or speaking in Bulgarian.

It was rather shocking to the author to see so much caution and fear about the acknowledgement of one’s non-Greek ethnic origin in Canada, which is a free and democratic country that officially protects the right of free expression of every person. The Hellenic Macedonians of Slavic origin seemed to be in the most disadvantageous position in the Greek community. On the one hand, they continue to face intimidation and suspicion by their Greek peers, who constantly doubt and test their loyalty to the Greek cause, and on the other hand, both the Macedonian and Bulgarian diasporas refer to the Slavophones with the derogatory term *Grkomani*, and consider them traitors, or in the best case scenario- victims of the Greek government and propaganda. Further research into the Hellenic Macedonians of Slavic origin in Toronto and elsewhere in North America will allow a better understanding of the issues which the Slavophones face in their relations within the Greek community and the Bulgarian and Macedonian communities.

The actively-involved Greeks in the Hellenic community regard the Bulgarian community and Bulgarian historical sources as allies against the ethnic Macedonian community and its arguments. The Greeks, however, did not feel it necessary to respond with historical books and articles to the Macedonian interpretations of Balkan history in Toronto. This was left for the historians in Greece. Instead, their major goals in the 1990s were twofold– to lobby against the Canadian recognition of the FYROM with its constitutional

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

name Republic of Macedonia and to prevent any ethnic Macedonian initiatives in Toronto, which mentioned Macedonia as a non-Greek entity or Alexander the Great. The Hellenic diaspora, however, seemed to be more divided internally than the ethnic Macedonian nationalists. The divisions along the lines north vs. south and ethnic Greeks vs. Slavophones with a Greek identity were quite visible and admitted by some members of the Hellenic diaspora.

5.3: Macedono-Bulgarian Voices

If in the Macedonian and Greek diasporas one percent of the community members indicate an interest in history, nationalism and Macedonia, in the Bulgarian community there is literally a handful of Cold War immigrants who get involved in historical debates about Macedonia. MPO activists such as George Mladenov and his brother Pando Mladenov are the most active figures in the Bulgarian community in Toronto in expressing the Bulgarian view on the Macedonian issue. They are vehemently anti-communist and oppose any expression of a Macedonian ethnic identity and nationalism, using the traditional Bulgarian arguments on Macedonia and its history and heritage.⁷² The priest of Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral, the Rev. Valeri Shumarov, as well as the priest of St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Rev Boris Drangov, are other prominent figures in the Bulgarian community who showed an interest in the Macedonian issue during their interviews with the author. Both priests, however, were very moderate.

⁷² George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007; Pando Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

George Mladenov was born in 1931 in the village of Musomishte in the vicinity of the Pirin Macedonian town of Goce Delchev, Bulgaria. His parents were children when they moved to Bulgaria as refugees from Aegean Macedonia (part of Greece since the Balkan Wars) shortly after the First World War. Mr. Mladenov witnessed the infamous Bulgarian census of 1946, when the population of Pirin Macedonia, including his parents, were forced to declare a Macedonian nationality on the census questionnaires. His father refused to comply with the communist demands and change his ethnic identity and, as a result, he was interned together with his family in the village of Ribarica in north central Bulgaria. Arrested, interrogated and sent to labour camps for his beliefs, George Mladenov did not change his anti-communist nationalist views and he managed to escape to Canada via refugee camps in Greece and Italy in 1951. Soon after his arrival, Mr. Mladenov joined the MPO and St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Regardless of his career as a pharmacist, George continued to have a great interest into the history of Bulgaria and the Balkans.⁷³

As nationalists from the other ethnic communities, Mladenov expressed his scepticism regarding the Canadian census results. He argued that the Canadian censuses could not give the exact number of any ethnicity, because many of the people did not want to be considered in ethnic terms.⁷⁴ Thus, he also implied that ethnic and national identity was a constant category, which could not change over time. To clarify his views, the author asked the informant if it was possible for a person to have a different ethnic and national identity from his parents and grandparents. Mladenov answered that: "It is impossible! It is possible only in Macedonia [he meant in the FYROM], because they are under [Serbian] occupation.

⁷³ George Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2007.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

In Macedonia you can say whatever you want, as long as you do not say you are Bulgarian.”⁷⁵ As a supporter of the traditional Bulgarian position on the issue, Mr. Mladenov maintained that Macedonia was a purely geographic term and, by creating the Macedonian nationality in 1944, the Serbs wanted to dilute the Bulgarian nationality. “By saying: ‘you were Macedonian’, they were saying: ‘you are not Bulgarian,’” concluded Mladenov.⁷⁶

He also claimed that the Yugoslav government created the Macedonian churches in Toronto as anti-Bulgarian institutions, which were to divide the Bulgarian community. This was one of the major reasons why Mladenov and his family joined St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Even as an atheist, Mladenov stated that he could not allow the Serbs to take over this church.”⁷⁷ Thus, the major conflict between the new Bulgarian and the new Macedonian communities in the 1960s until the 1980s was about the three Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Churches in Toronto and the constant provocations of Yugoslav Macedonians, who wanted to affiliate these churches with the newly-created Macedonian Orthodox Church. Due to the dominance of the older generation Bulgarian immigrants from Macedonia, however, who were fervent Bulgarian nationalists and anti-communists, all Yugoslav attempts failed. Mladenov admitted that, since the 1990s, there were no attempts at taking over of the churches, but the conflict between the Bulgarian and the Macedonian communities was based on historic grounds. His views confirmed the thesis of the author that the conflict between the two communities was based on the fact that Macedonian immigrants refused to recognize their Bulgarian past, and the Bulgarian nationalists refused to recognize their current Macedonian ethnic identity and language.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Mladenov also criticized the Greek policy of blacklisting ethnic Bulgarian immigrants from Greece and thus, intimidating them to be formally attached to the Greek diaspora in Toronto.⁷⁸ It was obvious, however, that the Greeks were Bulgarian allies against a common enemy, the ethnic Macedonian community, which provoked the ire of both its Balkan neighbours.

Regarding the ethnic Macedonian community, Mladenov noted that even they did not communicate with Bulgarian community members. Mladenov maintained that the ethnic Macedonians had an inferiority complex towards the Bulgarian community and many of them were uneducated, particularly the Macedonian war veterans. Mr. Mladenov genuinely believed not only that there was no Macedonian language and ethnic identity, but also that all people who claim to be Macedonians were either paid with Yugoslav/Serbian money to say so or they were simply uneducated and thus, they were not aware of the historical facts. Mladenov was persuaded that a good educational campaign among the Macedonian people would solve the problem of their ethnic identity. He completely dismissed the idea of personal choice in regards to ethnic and national identity.⁷⁹

Mr. Mladenov also had an interesting view on the reaction of the Canadian authorities and general public towards the Macedonian conflict. He noted that Canadian society was indifferent towards interethnic relations in Toronto and the only thing that the authorities wanted to prevent was a violent clash among the diasporas. Thus, the Canadian government also ignored the humiliation of a number of Canadian citizens of Macedonian origin who were not allowed entry into Greece due to their ethnic identity. "Canada would not risk its

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

relations with Greece for a handful of people,” noted Mladenov.⁸⁰ Indeed, the Canadian authorities are not only indifferent but also very poorly informed about the contesting Balkan claims over Macedonia.

Nevertheless, George seemed to be very optimistic about the future and he expressed his belief that the FYROM would join Bulgaria in the future and this, according to him was both a desirable and a just scenario. Regardless of his age, he continues to write articles and letters to politicians on a regular basis regarding the history of Macedonia as well as letters of protest against FYROM distortions of Bulgarian history.

George’s older brother Pando Mladenov expressed similar views on the Macedonian issue even if his opinion did not completely match that of his brother. Pando Mladenov appeared to be the oldest contributor to this thesis, since he was born in 1924 in the village of Terlis, near the Greek town of Drama, Aegean Macedonia. However, he spent his childhood in Pirin Macedonia. Beaten and tortured by the Bulgarian communists for his nationalism and anti-communism, Pando Mladenov managed to cross the Greek-Bulgarian border illegally in 1948 and in 1949 he came to Toronto.⁸¹ His bitter experience hardened his stance against communism and against anyone who wanted to subdue Bulgarian nationalism in Macedonia. Pando was even more extreme than his brother in his hatred of communist ideology and the Serbs. To him, all residents in Macedonia who proclaimed a Macedonian identity were “Serbomans” and consequently he referred to the Greek Slavophones with a Greek national identity as “Grkomans.”⁸² Pando Mladenov did not believe that reconciliation

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Pando Mladenov, interviewed by the author, 16 May 2007.

⁸² *Ibid.*

was possible between the Bulgarian and the Macedonian communities. He maintained that all Macedonian and Bulgarian priests during the Cold War were communist spies.⁸³

Pando did not hide his opinion on the first Macedonian Orthodox Church in Toronto, St. Clement of Ohrid, which was in his words: “the most dangerous Serbo-communist nest.”⁸⁴ As his brother, he maintained that the FYROM “continues to be a Serbo-communist province.”⁸⁵ Mladenov fervently defended the view that the only goal of both the pro-FYROM United Macedonians organization and the pro-Greek Pan-Macedonian Association was to divide the Bulgarian community and to attract to these associations all Bulgarians from Macedonia. Mladenov also claimed that both the Yugoslav and the Greek consulates in Toronto expanded their personnel during the Cold War in order to infiltrate with spies the Bulgarian diaspora in Toronto and to intimidate Bulgarian immigrants from all parts of Macedonia. Pando claimed that the Greek consulate attempted to spy even on him in the late 1950s. In 1958, Mr. Mladenov opened a little store on the corner of Pape St. and Danforth St. in the core of the Greek neighbourhood in Toronto. One of his wife’s aunts asked Pando to hire her relative, an ethnic Bulgarian from Aegean Macedonia, named Kosta Nikopolous. Kosta went to talk to the Greek consul regarding his mother and brother, who were still in Greece and the consul asked Kosta to read the MPO bulletin *The Macedonian Tribune* and to translate from Bulgarian the major articles. Kosta avoided the offer, claiming that he could speak but not read and write in Bulgarian but then the Greek consul asked him to watch who the visitors of Pando’s store were and to report overheard conversations.⁸⁶ It was not possible for the author to verify the validity of this story, but it was quite clear that the informant was

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

still suspicious of any Greeks or ethnic Macedonians who wanted to approach him even in 2007.

Pando Mladenov was also very critical of the Macedonian historical claims and the work of Dr. Lillian Petroff and Professor Andrew Rossos in Toronto. To him, both historians were paid by Yugoslavia for their pro-Macedonian research. Mladenov stated that initially, Dr. Lillian Petroff attended St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church and he gave her historical documents to facilitate her work on the Bulgarian immigration from Macedonia. Even though Petroff was quite moderate in her work, Mladenov claimed that the Yugoslav consul in Toronto, Mitev, who came from Bitola, Vardar Macedonia threatened Petroff that if she did not discontinue her pro-Bulgarian arguments on the history of the Macedonian immigration to Toronto, she would lose her job. She informed Mladenov about this conversation, which happened in the period 1965-1970 and after a protest of the Bulgarian and Croatian ethnic communities, Mitev had to leave Canada as a *persona non grata*.⁸⁷ This is another quite intriguing story, which the author could not verify and further research on the matter might reveal interesting facts about the relations of the Yugoslav diplomats with the local ethnic communities in Toronto. Mr. Pando Mladenov speculated that, a few years after this incident, Dr. Lillian Petroff ceased to appear at events organized by the Bulgarian community and started to publish pro-Macedonian articles, which was a sign to Mladenov that she was bribed by the Yugoslav government.⁸⁸ Mladenov did not even consider that historians, as well as all other scholars and scientists, might change their views on a certain subject due to a number of different factors such as new evidence discovered on the issue. Nevertheless, it is still quite puzzling to the author that, even though Dr. Lillian

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

Petroff must have been aware of the numerous mistranslated historical documents in the collections of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO), she never corrected these falsifications, which were described in the previous chapter.

Pando Mladenov also showed a similar attitude towards the work of Professor Andrew Rossos of the University of Toronto, who was also supposedly bribed by Belgrade.⁸⁹ As an old IMRO member, Mladenov was particularly infuriated with the speculations of Rossos regarding the IMRO, since he claimed that IMRO was not a Bulgarian but a Macedonian nationalist organization.⁹⁰

Following the nationalist mode of thinking, Mr. Pando Mladenov firmly believed that the truth was on the Bulgarian side and that he was the most reliable source on the history of the Macedonian immigration to Toronto. Regardless of his age, he wrote and published his memories in 2005 in Bulgaria under the title *V Makedoniya i daleko ot neya. Spomenite mi* [In Macedonia and Away: My Memories], which contain valuable information about the communist repressions in Bulgaria of the 1940s and the inter-ethnic relations in Toronto even if everything was interpreted through Bulgarian nationalist lenses.⁹¹

Even at age 84, Pando Mladenov continued to be an active member of the MPO and his parish of St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and he was still writing anti-communist articles and letters to the editor.

The priest of Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral, the Rev. Valeri Shumarov, was much more moderate in his views. Rev. Shumarov was born in

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Andrew Rossos, "The British Foreign Office and Macedonian National Identity, 1918-1941," *Slavic Review*, 53 (2), Summer 1994, 369-94.

⁹¹ Pando Mladenov, *V Makedoniya I daleko ot neya. Spomenite mi*. [In Macedonia and Away: My Memories] (Blagoevgrad: Irin-Pirin, 2005).

the Pirin Macedonian town of Goce Delchev and he has been in Toronto since 1999.⁹² Rev. Shumarov has a Bulgarian ethnic identity and he mentioned that he and his parents never questioned their ethnic identity. He also confirmed that Sts. Cyril and Methody was the oldest Bulgarian church in Toronto and its documents were written in Bulgarian until the 1950s and predominantly in English after the 1950s. He considered the Macedonian claims that there were church documents written in Macedonian as “mere speculations.”⁹³

Rev. Valeri Shumarov, however, had a very realistic view on the number of Bulgarian Canadians in Toronto. He noted that about 15,000 Bulgarian immigrants came to Toronto after the end of the Cold War but he argued that he did not take into account most of the descendants of the Cold War immigrants and the pre-WW II Bulgarian settlers, because they were assimilated. He stated that: “Claims citing 100,000 or 150,000 and more Bulgarians in Toronto are unrealistic.”⁹⁴ Thus, he accepted that ethnic and national identities might change over time, even if he did not want to apply this observation to the case of Macedonians.

Rev. Boris Drangov, who is a priest at St. George Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, demonstrated very liberal views on nationalism, regardless of origin, which included fervent Bulgarian nationalists from Vardar Macedonia. The grandfather of Rev. Boris Drangov was Colonel Boris Drangov, who was one of the key figures in the Ilinden-Preobrazhenie Uprising of 1903 in Macedonia. His father Cyril Drangov was a prominent member of the IMRO killed by the Bulgarian communists in 1946.⁹⁵

⁹² Rev. Valeri Shumarov, interviewed by the author, 15 May, 2007.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Rev. Boris Drangov, interviewed by the author, 10 May, 2007.

Rev. Drangov noted that there were people in his church who were from Macedonia and identified themselves as Bulgarians, and others who identified as Macedonians. The relations between the two groups depended on the people involved and their tolerance and respect for different opinions. He observed that there were people who had peaceful relations, whereas others did not even talk to each other. However, Rev. Drangov argued that, regardless of the Bulgarian historical heritage and Bulgarian ethnic affiliation in the past, Macedonians are a nation now with their own identity. Aware of the Bulgarian nationalist arguments, Rev. Drangov also noted: "I know that many Bulgarian nationalists in the community don't want to accept it, but this is the reality."⁹⁶ Thus, he dismissed the militantly aggressive nationalist approach of forcing people to accept an ethnic and national identity. Regardless of his strong disapproval of Macedonian distortions of historic facts and documents, the priest showed empathy even to the old FYROM historians arguing that: "It is not easy for them to denounce all their writings, because in a way it is equal to denounce all your life."⁹⁷ Thus, he implied that it was a matter of pride for the FYROM historians to continue with their approach to history. It was quite a surprise to encounter an interviewee from Bulgaria who accepted the status quo in Macedonia.

Regardless of the vehement denial of the Bulgarian nationalists in Toronto that a separate Macedonian ethnic identity could exist, they clashed with the Macedonian community in the media, over the internet and in public lectures. The old age of the Bulgarian nationalists prevented more violent outcomes, as well as the lack of interest of most Bulgarian Canadians in Toronto towards diaspora activities.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

Interviews with representatives of the Macedonian, Greek and Bulgarian diasporas in Toronto showed that no more than one percent of the community members were interested in history and consequently, they were involved in the debate over Macedonia. Most of these activists are at least in their 40s, except in the Bulgarian community, with activists who are predominantly in their 70s and 80s. Contrary to the author's initial expectations, alongside the nationalists, there are prominent figures in all three communities, who express very moderate and tolerant positions towards the right of every person to choose his/her own ethnic and national identity. Nevertheless, these voices, who call for peace and tolerance, are usually missing in the mainstream and ethnic media. Their moderate views are not interesting for the mainstream media, which look for sensations and their respective ethnic media ignore them, because they are not 'patriotic' enough since they do not comply with the official positions of the FYROM, Bulgaria and Greece. As a result, the extreme nationalists who have the media's attention attract followers to rally for their old country position and provoke conflicts with people from the other communities, who do not share their views on Macedonia. The extreme nationalists of all three ethnic diasporas demonstrated confidence that they spoke in the name of the whole community and, thus, they created the impression that the conflict is not among a small number of people from each community, but a clash which involved all members of the three communities.

5.4: Virtual Wars and Street Clashes: A Contested Ethnic Identity

In 1959 the Yugoslav government declared that the only representative of Macedonia and the Macedonians was Yugoslavia.⁹⁸ Thus, the roots of the Macedonian conflict were created by the competition for the allegiance of the Aegean Macedonian immigrants to Canada. From the 1950s until the 1980s, the major rival of the ethnic Macedonian community and Macedonian nationalism was the Bulgarian ethnic group. It was a multifaceted conflict, including history and heritage, language, the local Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox churches in Toronto and the legacy of the old pre-war Bulgarian immigrants from Macedonia.

The articles and comments in *Makedonski Glas* [Macedonian Voice] about the issues that divide the Bulgarian and Macedonian diasporas illustrated this conflict. *Makedonski Glas* [Macedonian Voice] was a pro-communist newspaper which followed the Bulgarian Communist Party's orders. Thus, it acknowledged the existence of a separate Macedonian nation in 1957 with the hope that the Bulgarian communists would take control of the new Yugoslav Macedonian immigrants. An editorial in the first issue of *Makedonski Glas* even denied the existence of any conflict between the Bulgarian and the Macedonian communities.⁹⁹

Nevertheless, the conflict was apparent. The reporter of *Makedonski Glas*, Nikola Georgiev, criticized the speech of the Bulgarian Archbishop Andrey Velichki who spoke on 26 May, 1957 at the Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Church and referred to the

⁹⁸ Asen Balikci, Asen and Bonka Stoyanova-Boneva, *Balkanski Biznesmeni v Kanada: Bãlgaro-Makedonskata Etnicheska Grupa kum Sredata na Veka*. [Balkan Businessmen in Canada: The Macedono-Bulgarian Ethnic Group around the Mid-20th Century] (Sofia: LIK, 1993), 9.

⁹⁹ -----, "Do Chitatelite" [To the Readers], *Makedonski Glas* [Macedonian Voice], no. 1, 24th May, 1957, 1.

immigrants from Vardar and Aegean Macedonia as Bulgarians from Ohrid and Bulgarians from Salonica. Georgiev criticized the lack of references to the Macedonian nation.¹⁰⁰

Archbishop Andrey, responsible for all Bulgarian Orthodox Churches, expressed the traditional Bulgarian nationalist position that there was no Macedonian language and Macedonian ethnic nation. Nikola Georgiev's criticisms of this position indicated that initially the Bulgarian left-wing immigrants disapproved of this stance. The aggressive Yugoslav anti-Bulgarian policies, however, as well as the new orders from Sofia changed the direction of the editor of *Makedonski Glas*, Simeon Cvetkov. In March 1958, Cvetkov noted in his editorial that: "Recently, there is a significant debate in Toronto about a Macedonian language, Macedonian nation and why *Makedonski Glas* is published in Bulgarian."¹⁰¹ Cvetkov explained that until the end of the Second World War, the Macedonians did not have their own written language and used Bulgarian instead. He argued that the creation and the use of the new Macedonian language was a fact due to an order by the new people's government. The editor concluded that this language divided the Macedonians and did not unite them.¹⁰² These arguments would be repeated thousands of times by the Bulgarian ethnic community, but Cvetkov's revelation about the Yugoslav government's linguistic control was much more interesting. The editor maintained that the newspaper *Novo Vreme* [New Time], issued by Bulgarian communists in Toronto in 1945-1946, had 170 subscribers from Yugoslav Macedonia, including Skopje, Resen, Ohrid, Prilep and even the Yugoslav capital Belgrade. None of these subscribers, however, received even one issue of the newspaper, because it was published in Bulgarian and thus, it was banned by the

¹⁰⁰ Nikola Georgiev, "Bankata v Torontskata Carkva Sv. Sv. Kiril i Metodij" [The Bank at the Toronto Church Sts. Cyril and Methody], *Makedonski Glas* [Makedonski Glas], no. 2, 7th June, 1957, 2.

¹⁰¹ Simeon Cvetkov, "Makedonskiyat Pismen ezik" [The Macedonian Written Language], *Makedonski Glas*, no. 19, 21st March, 1958, 1.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 2.

authorities.”¹⁰³ Thus, Cvetkov revealed one of the first goals of the Yugoslav authorities, which was to isolate the Macedonian community from its Bulgarian cultural and linguistic heritage.

The Yugoslav authorities launched a similar attack on the presence of the Bulgarian language in Toronto in the late 1950s. A Yugoslav diplomat asked a subscriber of *Makedonski Glas* that, if it were a Macedonian newspaper, why it was published in Bulgarian? The reply of the editor Simeon Cvetkov was that if the honourable Yugoslav diplomat had a walk among the immigrants, he would notice that all immigrants from Vardar and Aegean Macedonia, who know how to write and read, do so in the Bulgarian language.¹⁰⁴ In 1959 when the Yugoslav government openly challenged the Bulgarian leadership of the Macedonian immigrants in Toronto, *Makedonski glas* launched an attack against both the Greek and the Yugoslav governments, criticizing the anti-Bulgarian policies of both governments and maintaining that the Yugoslavs abandoned the ‘true’ communist ideology, whereas the Greeks were described as “monarchofascists.”¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, both the Greeks and the Serbs were proclaimed to be “malicious enemies of the Macedonian people.”¹⁰⁶ Hence, even the left-wing Bulgarian immigrants indicated that they supported the Bulgarian nationalists in their desire to neutralize the attempts of the Yugoslav and Greek communities to attract newcomers in their diasporas.

The Macedonian historian Tanas Vražinovski also described a very acute church conflict in the 1960s and the 1970s between the Bulgarian and the Macedonian communities.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Simeon Cvetkov, “Zashto “Makedonski Glas” ne se spisva na makedonski Pismen ezik?” [Why *Macedonian Voice* is not published in the Macedonian Literary Language?], *Makedonski Glas*, no. 20, 4th April, 1958, 1.

¹⁰⁵ -----, “Belgradskite Titovisti i Atinskite Monarhofashisti- Zlostni Vragove na Makedonskiya Narod” [The Belgrade Titoists and the Athens Monarchofascists- Vicious enemies of the Macedonian People], *Makedonski Glas* [Makedonski Glas], no. 40, 28th August, 1959, 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

The Bulgarian priests were constantly preaching against the illegitimate Macedonian church of St. Clement of Ohrid, built in Toronto and the St. Clement parishioners were trying to attract more people from the Macedono-Bulgarian churches to join their church.¹⁰⁷ In 1968, the Macedono-Bulgarian Churches in Toronto and the MPO published an article in the International journal *Balkania*, entitled “Belgrade’s Falsification of History and the Usurpation of the Bulgarian Church in Macedonia,” which expressed the enormous indignation of the Bulgarian community in North America against the attempts of the Yugoslav government to destroy the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Macedonia and to turn the Macedono-Bulgarian Churches overseas into Macedonian churches, controlled by Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁸ The Yugoslav authorities managed to build an anti-Bulgarian Macedonian ethnic community in the 1960s and 1970s in Toronto and even to attract some pre-war left-wing immigrants from Macedonia among their ranks but they failed to break away the three old Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Churches in Toronto from the authority of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and its priests. In order to diminish additionally the Bulgarian influence, pro-Yugoslav immigrants probably conducted the mistranslations and misplacements of hundreds of Bulgarian historical documents, related to the pre-war immigrants from Macedonia to Toronto and preserved by the Multicultural History Society of Ontario.

This conflict, which included churches, Bulgarian and Yugoslav diplomats and activists of the MPO and United Macedonians, was in its essence a competition for territory and influence over the Macedonian immigrants. The involved parties, however, managed to keep the conflict within the domain of their ethnic communities and they did not wish to attract the attention of the Canadian public. Thus, political demonstrations and meetings,

¹⁰⁷ Vražinovski, *Organizacionnata struktura* [The Organizational Structure], 105-7.

¹⁰⁸ -----, “Belgrade’s Falsification of History and the Usurpation of the Bulgarian Church in Macedonia,” *Balkania: An International Quarterly Magazine on Balkan Affairs*, 2 (1) 1968, 32-5.

petitions to the Canadian government and a constant flow of letters to the editor to major Canadian newspapers, which could inform the general Canadian public about the Macedonian issue, were not among the preferred methods. In fact, the Greek community in Toronto was even less vocal until the late 1980s about its positions on Macedonia and the Macedonians. The *Hellenic Tribune of Canada* did not publish a single article on Macedonian nationalism and identity in the 1950s and 1960s. The newspaper concentrated instead on Cyprus, which was a major Greek concern for the period.¹⁰⁹ Besides, until the 1980s, Vardar Macedonia was part of Yugoslavia and the Greek community did not foresee the creation of the FYROM as a separate entity, which could express more vocally a Macedonian ethnic identity and challenge more seriously the ancient Macedonian Hellenic symbols. Nevertheless, the Greek authorities also attempted to control Greek citizens, who came to Canada from Aegean Macedonia. The Greeks were concerned about the anti-Greek propaganda of political immigrants, who identified as Bulgarians or Macedonians. Thus, the Greek diplomats and priests in Toronto also used pressure and intimidation to persuade the Slavophones from Aegean Macedonia to declare, at least publicly, a Greek identity.¹¹⁰ Relatives of anti-Greek immigrants faced police intimidation and surveillance in Greece throughout the Cold War.¹¹¹

By the mid-1980s the conflict between the Macedonian and the Bulgarian communities in Toronto was at a virtual standstill. By then the Yugoslavs had achieved their goal of building an ethnic Macedonian community with an anti-Bulgarian orientation with its own Macedonian Orthodox Church. The Bulgarians managed to keep within their community most of the older generation immigrants, as well as the three Macedono-

¹⁰⁹ *Hellenic Tribune of Canada*, 1958-1968.

¹¹⁰ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 268.

¹¹¹ Charles Price, *Southern Europeans in Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1963), 317.

Bulgarian churches but, due to the lack of newcomers from Bulgaria, their community was very small and uninterested in the Bulgarian community agenda. By the mid-1980s, the only Bulgarians who still confronted the Macedonian community in Toronto were a handful of old generation Bulgarian nationalists and members of the MPO.

In the mid-1980s, however, the conflict between the Macedonian and the Greek ethnic communities intensified and it would escalate even further in the 1990s. The death of Tito led to a rise of ethnic nationalism in Yugoslavia, as well as to the weakening of Yugoslavism and Yugoslav influence over the ethnic Macedonian organizations abroad. The United Macedonians Organization in Toronto started to proclaim vehemently its Macedonian national character. The major Greek nationalist organization in Toronto – the Pan-Macedonian Association – on the other hand, denied the existence of a separate Macedonian ethnicity. Both organizations managed to mobilize thousands of supporters for their cause and attempted to raise the awareness of the Canadian public on the issue and to attract prominent Canadians to their side.

On September 11, 1985, hundreds of Macedonians, most of them members of the United Macedonians, protested in front of the Greek consulate in Toronto against the “Greek denial of the existence of Macedonia and Macedonians.”¹¹² This protest would be one of the many anti-Greek demonstrations, which would increase the tension between the two communities in Toronto. Nevertheless, in 1987 the President of the Pan-Macedonian Association, Dr. Jim Karas argued on the pages of one of the Greek community newspapers *Diaspora*, that there was no Macedonian problem.¹¹³ Dr. Karas ignored the increasing confrontation between the Macedonian and the Greek communities but he revealed the

¹¹² -----, “Makedoncite demonstriraat pred grckiot konzulat” [The Macedonians Are Protesting in Front of the Greek Consulate], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 1, 25th September, 1985, 1.

¹¹³ James G. Karas, “There Is Definitely No Macedonian Problem,” *Diaspora*, September-October 1986, 8.

pressure within the Greek community even on the Slavophone immigrants like him who self-identified as Greeks. Dr. Karas noticed:

I distinctly remember the moment I discovered that having been born in one of the villages of Florina posed a problem about my national identity. Within days of my arrival in Toronto [12 years old], on a hot and humid July evening, a friend of the family asked me if I was a Greek or Macedonian? The short answer is: Yes. That should end the discussion but unfortunately it never does. The question that usually follows is: Are you Slav? But then you know you are in for a lengthy talk. You start explaining that no, you are not a Slav, that you are Greek but that you were born in one of the best areas of Greece which is called Macedonia. By that time your interrogator realizes and tells you that you are one of “them.” The discussion continues and the interrogator asks you if you realize that “the real Greeks”, the ones “south of the ditch” do not like us, they don’t think we are Greeks and in fact, they lose no opportunity in calling us Bulgarians [...] Eventually your interrogator will leave shaking his head at being unable to reason with you and at being unable to persuade you that whatever you maybe, you are simply not Greek..”¹¹⁴

Thus, Dr. Karas clearly indicated that the Greek community contributed to the deep regional cleavage within it. Many Greeks from the South continued to be suspicious of the loyalty of the Slavophone Greeks from Aegean Macedonia and thus, they could alienate them and even push them into the arms of the Macedonian ethnic community. Dr. Karas also disapproved of the Greek insecurity towards the Greekness of Macedonia. A member of the Board of Directors of the Greek community asked him if they could organize a festival about the Greekness of Macedonia. Karas replied ironically: “We will have a festival about the Greekness of Macedonia after we have a festival about the Greekness of Athens and Sparta. He got the message and dropped the subject.”¹¹⁵ Macedonia was still not an independent country and the Macedonian community was small in Toronto but the Greeks still felt threatened by the Macedonian challenge to the Greekness of Macedonia.

In 1987 the Greeks started to increase the pressure on anyone who dared to proclaim officially a Macedonian ethnic identity. The Greek government paid attention to Toronto, because there are more vocal Macedonian nationalists there than in Yugoslavia. Dr. Karas also observed during our interview, that the bastion of Macedonian nationalism was in

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

Toronto and Melbourne.¹¹⁶ Hence, Greek government officials started to visit Toronto to make sure that the local Greek diaspora was aware of the official Greek position on Macedonia and supported it. On 12 April, 1987, the advisor to the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Evangelos Kofos, gave a lecture at the Greek Community Cultural Centre in Toronto. The two-hour lecture was entitled “The Historical Factors in the Formation of the National Consciousness in Macedonia during the 19th and 20th centuries” and it was organized by the Greek Consulate in Toronto, the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto and the Pan-Macedonian Association of Toronto. The lecture, however, was attended by only 250 people.¹¹⁷ In early October of 1987, the Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercuri, visited Toronto and gave a lecture on the Greekness of Macedonia, but it was also poorly-attended.¹¹⁸

Meanwhile, the Bulgarian community also decided to revive its interest in Macedonia. On 7 November, 1987, in the of Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Cathedral, Dr. Ivan Gitev gave a lecture about the Bulgarian element in Macedonia but it was attended by only 40 people. The poor attendance at lectures dedicated to Macedonia in both the Greek and the Bulgarian communities was a clear sign that the majority of the members of both communities were not concerned and actively interested in this debate. The handful of people who were involved in the debate, however, managed to escalate the conflict in the next few years.

The Greek government, however, was much more concerned about this surge of Macedonian nationalism than the Greek diaspora in Toronto. The Greek authorities started to blacklist people born in Greece, usually in Aegean Macedonia, who expressed publicly an

¹¹⁶ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

¹¹⁷ Vasil Zigomanov, “Anti-Macedonian Rhetoric Again,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 31, 15th May, 1987, 1, 7.

¹¹⁸ Vasil Zigomanov, “Mercuri – Poor Performance,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 37, 15th November, 1987, 1.

ethnic Macedonian identity in Canada or Australia. In fact, the governor of the Prefecture of Florina, Greece publicly acknowledged the existence of the blacklist on 23rd July, 2003.¹¹⁹ Thirteen Macedonian Canadians, who were refused entry into Greece in July 1988, wrote to the then Foreign Affairs Minister Joe Clark to ask for a formal investigation and intervention of the Canadian government to protect its citizens.¹²⁰ Regardless of the fact that Canadian citizens were directly affected by Greek government actions, the Canadian government seemed very hesitant to get involved on behalf of its own citizens. Greece was a much more important partner of Canada on the international scene than the disintegrating federal state of Yugoslavia or, since 1991, the FYROM, which still struggles for international recognition. The Canadian authorities were also careful not to agitate the Greek diaspora in Canada, which was more than ten times larger than the ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto. Thus, the Greek Canadians could tip the election results in favour of a political party, whereas the Macedonian Canadians could not. Canadian Government officials showed an implicit support for the Greek position on Macedonia throughout the 1990s, even if their speeches were oftentimes ambiguous in order to prevent an extreme reaction from the Macedonian diaspora. The Minister of Multiculturalism, Gerry Weiner, visited only the Greek community in Toronto in December 1989, which was a sign of implicit support but the speech of the Minister was very moderate. He simply stated that: “The province in the State of Greece called Macedonia belongs to Greece.”¹²¹ This was a very intelligent move, which indicated that Canada would not support any territorial claims on Greek territory, since Aegean Macedonia is a Greek province. And yet, it also leaves some room to the Canadian

¹¹⁹ *The Macedonian Minority in Greece: Report by the Macedonian Human Rights Movement of Canada* (www.mhrmc.ca/reports/03/osce_greece.html).

¹²⁰ Christine Harminc, “Macedonian Canadians Seek Probe of Greek Ban,” *The Globe and Mail*, 22 August, 1988 reprinted in *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 47, 9th September, 3.

¹²¹ Pete James Kondoff, “Half Truth, Adding a Lie,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 63, 15th January, 1990, 3.

government for manoeuvring, since the FYROM, which was still part of Yugoslavia in 1989, was not a part of Greece and thus the Canadian government might have a different position on this territory. Nevertheless, the nationalists in the Macedonian community expected unrealistically that Canada could back their irredentist claims to Greece, as well as their historical interpretations. Pete James Kondoff wrote a fiery article in the *Makedonija/Macedonia* on the position of the Minister.¹²² In order to prevent any further negative reactions, Gerry Weiner wrote an open letter to the Macedonian community arguing that he had no intention of taking sides on the Macedonian issue and that both the Greek and Macedonian communities misinterpreted his words.¹²³ Throughout the 1990s, both ethnic communities continued to accept every ambiguous speech of Canadian officials as either a direct assault on their cause or as a sign of the complete identification of Canada with their views.

In order to unite their ranks and to attract more supporters for their cause among the Slavophones, the United Macedonians Organization called for more tolerance towards the Slavic Aegean Macedonians, who self-identified as Greeks. According to the official statement of the United Macedonians: "Some people in Greece believe that there are no Macedonians and Macedonian is an artificial language created by Tito. Rather than automatically brand these people as "Grkomani" we should appreciate why they believe this and try to correct them, rather than alienate them."¹²⁴ This statement, however, appeared to be wishful thinking. The nationalists in the ethnic Macedonian community continued to be very frustrated by anyone born in Aegean or Pirin Macedonia, who preferred to self-identify as Greek or Bulgarian. The main targets became Dr. Jim Karas, the President of the Pan-

¹²² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²³ Open Letter to Mr. D. Gigeroff by Gerry Weiner, *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 63, 15th January, 1990, 4.

¹²⁴ -----, "Unity Through Human Rights," *United Macedonians/Obedineti Makedonci Bulletin*, May 1988, 4.

Macedonian Association of Ontario, as well as the previous president John Bardas, because they had prominent positions within the Greek community. The journalist of the *Makedonija/Macedonia* newspaper Plamen Žarov described Karas sarcastically as a person with a “weak Macedonian flame.”¹²⁵ Genuinely believing in the popular proverb in the Balkans that blood is thicker than water, Žarov concluded that: “[The Macedonian flame] is very weak but it is deep in your heart. And today you keep repeating the same words: “We are Greeks, we are Greeks.” It is like an automatic program in your head, my friend Karas. But we’ll see what will take over, the Greek propaganda artillery or the weak Macedonian flame in your heart.”¹²⁶ This mockery of the right of a person to self-identify and to define his own national identity continues to be one of the unresolved issues in the heated Macedonian debate. The ethnic Macedonian media assault against John Bardas was along the same lines. The Macedonians rhetorically asked Mr. Bardas how he was able to speak Macedonian better than English, even if he publicly negated the existence of this language.¹²⁷ Again, the argument was that if someone had a native language different than Greek, he/she could not self-identify as Greek. Language is very important in the ethnic nationalism theory and hence, both Bulgarians and Macedonians continue to argue the Slavophones in Greece speak Bulgarian or Macedonian, whereas the Greeks prefer to refer to this dialect with the neutral term Slavic.

By 1988, there was also a sudden revival of the Macedonian feud with the Bulgarian community. Dr. Aleksandar Trajanovski reaffirmed the Macedonian position that the three Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Churches in Toronto were “usurped” by the Bulgarians and

¹²⁵ Plamen Žarov, “Krevkiot Makedonski Plamen na James Karas.” [The Weak Macedonian Flame of James Karas], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 33, 15th July, 1987, 7.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹²⁷ -----, “A Single Macedonian,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 70, 15th August, 1990, 5.

the parishioners of the first Macedono-Bulgarian church who built in 1911 Sts. Cyril and Methody Macedono-Bulgarian Cathedral, were supposedly “forced” to join the Bulgarian Orthodox Synod.¹²⁸ Dr. Trajanovski failed to explain how parishioners from Macedonia, who were waiving Bulgarian flags, were forced to join the Bulgarian Synod, which did not even have a representative in Toronto before the building of the church or why most priests of these churches continue to be people born in Macedonia and yet self-identify as Bulgarians. However, the goal of Dr. Trajanovski was not to educate the old generation immigrants, who knew well the facts, but rather to deceive the third and fourth generation Vardar Macedonian immigrants with some propaganda from Skopje.

The Bulgarian community responded, but with more implicit propaganda. At the 14th Annual American-Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church Diocesan Convention in Dearborn, Michigan, the First Macedonian Orthodox Church in Toronto, St. Clement of Ohrid, was prominently featured as a Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church, which was a distortion.¹²⁹ St. Clement of Ohrid was founded by Macedonians from Yugoslavia with Macedonian national identity and it was never called a Macedono-Bulgarian Church. But, since the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, as all other Orthodox Churches, does not recognize the Macedonian Orthodox Church, the Bulgarian priests attempted to present St. Clement of Ohrid as a Bulgarian church. In fact as late as 2007, the Bulgarian-Canadian Business Directory listed St. Clement of Ohrid as a Bulgarian church.¹³⁰

In 1990, the differences between the Macedonian and Bulgarian communities on Macedonia were expressed more vocally by nationalists from both sides. A Bulgarian

¹²⁸ Aleksandar Trajanovski, “Makedonskite Crkovni Obstini vo prekuokeanskite zemi” [The Macedonian Parishes Overseas] In *Macedonian Emigrant's Almanac* 1988, 70-8.

¹²⁹ V. George. “St. Clement Ohridski, Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox Church,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 58, 15th August, 1989, 8.

¹³⁰ -----*Bulgarian-Canadian Business Directory 2007* (Toronto: Bulbiz/Lagrange Design, 2007), 52.

immigrant, whose father was born in Aegean Macedonia, in the village of Zagorichane, wrote the *Makedonija/Macedonia* newspaper to thank the Macedonian community for its television program *Macedonian Mosaic*. Jivka Vasileva wrote in her letter to the editor that she loved the program, because it was the only TV program in which she could hear perfect Bulgarian. She finished the letter with the rhetorical question: “How can you tell the people that they are not Bulgarian but Macedonian, when you speak perfect the Bulgarian Language?”¹³¹ Curiously, this letter to the editor did not provoke a fiery nationalist response from the Macedonian nationalists. At this point, the Macedonian nationalists in Toronto were more concerned with the plight of a few villages in Pirin Macedonia, which organized an ethnic Macedonian party in Bulgaria, called “OMO Ilinden.” The leaders were educated in Skopje and Belgrade and financed from Skopje but nevertheless they could not collect 3,000 signatures in order to register their party in Bulgaria. The Macedonians in Toronto, however, managed to draw 3,000 protesters in front of the Bulgarian consulate on August 6th, 1990. Macedonians from Toronto, Hamilton and Oshawa protested the Bulgarian refusal for registration and demanded an immediate registration of the party. Most of the protesters were again members of the United Macedonians Organization.¹³² The protest was a very well organized PR campaign, which could show that ethnic Macedonians existed in Bulgaria but the Bulgarian consulate completely ignored the protest and there was no Bulgarian counter-protest, which could escalate into a street fight with the ethnic Macedonians.

The death of the supreme President of the MPO, Ivan Mihailoff in September 1990 was joyfully announced in the Macedonian media in Toronto with the hope that after his

¹³¹ Jivka Vasileva. “Letter to the Editor: A Perfect Bulgarian Language,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 67, 15th May, 1990, 8.

¹³² -----, “3000 glasovi za Makedoncite od Pirin,” [3000 Voices for the Macedonians from Pirin], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 70, 15th August, 1990, 3.

death, there could be a rapprochement with the MPO. Tom Yonoff failed to mention that Ivan Mihailoff was born in the heart of Vardar Macedonia and he presented him instead as: “the Bulgarian fascist leader of the MPO, falsely called “Macedonian Patriotic Organization” in order to fool many naïve Macedonians, passed away. Ivan did not recognize the Macedonians. To him they were all Bulgarians.”¹³³ Yonoff applied the same argument for the immigrants from Macedonia, who preferred to self-identify as Bulgarians as it was used for the Hellenic Macedonians. These people were supposed to be misled and duped by the Bulgarian propaganda and the name of the organization. In reality, however, it was only immigrants from all geographic parts of Macedonia, who founded the MPO and chose its name, constitution and staunch Bulgarian nationalist orientation. The MPO, however, was oftentimes at odds with the Bulgarian government. Yonoff mentioned also that the MPO newspaper *The Macedonian Tribune*, should be called *The Bulgarian Tribune*, implying its orientation against Macedonian nationalism.¹³⁴

This statement indicated the second issue that needed to be overcome in the debate between the three communities and it was the use of the terms ‘Macedonia’ and ‘Macedonian.’ Each of these communities wants to have a monopoly over the use of the term.

Indeed, after the death of Ivan Mihailoff, the United Macedonians attempted to improve their relations with the MPO and its leader Ivan Lebamoff. In December of 1991 representatives of the United Macedonians Organization, including the UM President Vlade Grozdanovski met the MPO President Ivan Lebamoff at the Harbour Castle Hotel in Toronto

¹³³ Tom Yonoff. “Bulgarian MPO Leader Ivan Mihailoff Dead,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 72, 15th October, 1990, 5.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

in an attempt to improve their relations.¹³⁵ Regardless of the fact that it was a first meeting and it was not followed by any binding agreements, the meeting infuriated the extreme nationalist wing in the MPO. Pando Mladenov wrote an open letter to Ivan Lebamoff in order to indicate the indignation of the MPO branch in Toronto. The text of the letter reveals the harsh opposition which Lebamoff had to face within the MPO and, hence, it prevented him from continuing the direct communication with the United Macedonians Organization. In his open letter to Ivan Lebamoff, Mr. Mladenov overestimated the importance of this meeting as if the MPO turned overnight from a Bulgarian into an ethnic Macedonian communist organization:

Has Ivan Lebamoff fallen into Serboslavia's communist trap? The United Macedonians are misguided political junkies, created by the Security Services of Serboslavia specifically to fight MPO. Its first President and organizer Christopher Zavella was sent to Skopje and afterwards trained for three years in the HQ of UDBA from where he managed to escape and ended up in Sofia. The officers and members of the United Macedonians were handpicked traitors infiltrated and controlled by the generals and colonels of UDBA directly from Belgrade. Good luck Ivan! Maybe you will learn a thing or two after you meet the families of the 25,000 Bulgarians killed by the Serbocommunists and the 200,000 that passed through jails and the concentration camps in Idrizovo and Goli Otok?!¹³⁶

The animosity in this letter towards the biggest ethnic Macedonian organization in Toronto – the United Macedonians Organization – revealed the huge cleavage that divided the Bulgarian and the Macedonian communities. It also illustrated the tension within the Bulgarian community and the MPO between the nationalists and the more moderate MPO members. The nationalists continued to live in the past and to them the eternal conflict with the “Serbocommunists” was part of their life. They could not imagine any cooperation with such people. On the other hand, it was hard for the older generation Bulgarian nationalists to radically change their views on Macedonian nationalism, when they saw how it was forced

¹³⁵ ----- . “Leaders Seek Common Ground,” *The Macedonian Tribune*, 23rd January, 1992, 1.

¹³⁶ Pando Mladenov. “Open Letter to Ivan Lebamoff,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 89, 15th March, 1992, 10-11. The term “Serboslavia” refers to the former Yugoslavia, whereas “Serbocommunists” refers not only to Serbian communists, but also to communists in Vardar Macedonia, who collaborated with the Serbs.

on the local population and they had to pass through labour camps, because of their Bulgarian national identity. Some of the demands of the United Macedonians Organization were also very radical for a first meeting, such as the idea that the MPO newspaper, *The Macedonian Tribune*, was to be published in Macedonian instead of Bulgarian and English.¹³⁷ This aggressive approach of the United Macedonians Organization at the meeting facilitated the nationalist wing to persuade the MPO President that additional conversations would be futile. Thus, by the end of 1992 Tanas Jovanovski sadly concluded that the MPO was following in the steps of Ivan Mihailoff, i.e. it continued its Bulgarian nationalist orientation.¹³⁸ The Macedonian community once again failed to persuade the older generation of immigrants from Macedonia that they are not Bulgarians from Macedonia but ethnic Macedonians. The only consolation for the Macedonian nationalists was the quiet misplacement of all the issues of *The Macedonian Tribune* in the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO) into the Macedonian Collection and their description as written in Macedonian. It appeared that it was a much less exhausting task to persuade western researchers that Bulgarian nationalists wrote in Macedonian, than the actual authors of the texts.

If the sparks between the Macedonian and Bulgarian communities never turned into a big fire, the tension between the Macedonian and the Greek diasporas during the same period, 1989-1992, led to violent street clashes between members of the two ethnic communities. Fervent Greek nationalists wanted to prevent any manifestation of non-Hellenic Macedonian nationalism.

¹³⁷ Tanas Jovanovski. "MPO – po čekorite na Vančo Mihajlov," [MPO – Following the Steps of Ivan Mihailoff], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 98, 15th December, 1992, 1.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

In October of 1989, some Macedonians in Cambridge, Ontario, attempted to get involved in a local food festival, an activity which was not overtly nationalistic. Nevertheless, the local Greek group called the *Byzantine Cataphracts* distributed about 8,000 flyers to Cambridge homes warning the local residents not to take food “from these false Macedonian traitorous beasts.”¹³⁹ Thus, the Macedonian participation in the festival had to be cancelled and postponed for another date and venue.¹⁴⁰

The Macedonian-Greek tension quickly built up in Toronto by 1990. The National Holiday of Greece, 25th of March, became again a day of protest for the Macedonian community in Toronto. Macedonian nationalists marched with placards in front of the Greek consulate against the Greek government position on Macedonia. Fervent Macedonian and Greek nationalists also engaged in fistfights in front of Toronto City Hall.¹⁴¹ Despite these incidents, the members of the United Macedonians Organization were determined to continue their protests against the Greek authorities. Macedonian nationalists even decided to further provoke the Greek community with the idea of putting a wreath on the monument of Alexander the Great at the corner of Danforth Ave and Logan St. in Toronto. The Macedonians realized that this simple act was a direct challenge to the Greek community and the Hellenic heritage of Alexander the Great. To prevent violence on 29 July, 1990, 70 Macedonians carried a wreath with the permission of the Toronto City Hall. The Macedonians were met by a Greek crowd and forty police officers, who said to the Macedonians that they had to postpone the ceremony. The behaviour of the police frustrated

¹³⁹ Clyde Warrington. “Feud Simmers in Cambridge,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 60, 15th October, 1989, 11.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴¹ Petar Ginevski. “Od Revolt- Vozduhot Goreše”[The Air Was on Fire from the Tension], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 66, 15th April, 1990, 1, 6.

the Macedonians, who questioned the impartiality of the Toronto police.¹⁴² The scheduled five meetings between the Greek and the Macedonian communities, which were to resolve the issue, never took place, because the Greek community did not send its representatives to the third meeting.¹⁴³

The Macedonian diaspora, however, was more infuriated by the ignorance of W.J. McCormack, the Chief of Police of Toronto, who referred to the Macedonians in his report as “Serbian/Macedonians.”¹⁴⁴ Indeed, in a multicultural city such as Toronto, which boasts well over 120 ethnic communities, people could expect that the Chief of Police would be better informed about the ethnic communities in the city, particularly when he had to produce an official report. The Executive Director of the Macedonian-Canadian Human Rights Committee, Mary Dimitriou, wrote an open letter to W.J. McCormack to express her disappointment with the Chief’s superficial report.¹⁴⁵ On the one hand, this ignorance of the Canadian authorities and the general Canadian public about the essence of the Greek-Macedonian conflict disappointed both diasporas but on the other hand both communities saw an opportunity in this lack of information. In fact, the Canadians had a *tabula rasa* on the Macedonian conflict and thus, both Greeks and Macedonians wanted to ‘educate’ them with their own propaganda hoping that they would attract more Canadians to their side.

1992 was a peak year in this ethnic conflict, because the FYROM emerged as an independent country for first time in its history. Its community in Toronto was eager to build up its national pride, whereas the Greeks wanted to prevent by all means any publicity for the new country and its Macedonian identity. Furthermore, the Greek diaspora in Toronto also

¹⁴² Tanas Jovanovski. “Pravo na Protest za 1 Million Dolari” [The Right to Protest for \$1 Million], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 76, 15th March, 1991, 1.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Mary Dimitriou. “Macedonians, Period! – Open Letter to W.J. McCormack,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 76, 15th March, 1991, 7.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

opposed the international recognition of the FYROM under its official name, the Republic of Macedonia, an issue which is still unresolved. For first time, the Greek ethnic media, and particularly the *Danforth Voice*, started to pay significant attention to the Macedonian conflict. This development, however, was not surprising, because the situation in Cyprus was not as critical as it used to be in the 1970s. Secondly, the emergence of the FYROM as an independent country in 1991 posed a serious challenge to the Hellenic heritage of Ancient Macedonia due to the provocations of the Skopje nationalists who also claimed that all of northern Greece (Aegean Macedonia) was a Macedonian land populated with Macedonians. In order to avoid confusion, the Greek community used the terms Macedonia and Macedonians only when it referred to Greeks, whereas references to Slavs with a Macedonian identity as well as the FYROM were referred to as “Macedonia” and “Macedonians.” On 24 January, 1992, an article in the *Danforth Voice* proudly announced that the President of Greece urged the European Economic Community not to recognize the “Republic of “Macedonia”, lest they forfeit their alleged “historical” right to use “Macedonia” as their official name.”¹⁴⁶

Meanwhile, the Greek community in Canada organized a huge meeting on Parliament Hill on 29 February, 1992, in order to urge the Government of Canada to ignore the pleas of recognition of the FYROM. About 10,000 Greek Canadians gathered on Parliament Hill and the organizers claimed that they represented the viewpoint of almost 400,000 Greeks in Canada.¹⁴⁷ This demonstration also showed to the Canadian political elite the significance of the Hellenic community in Canada, which could gather as many people as there were in the entire Macedonian community. Thus, the Canadian government realized that it was not wise

¹⁴⁶ ----- . “EEC Told Not to Recognize Skopje,” *Danforth Voice*, no. 13, 24th January, 1992, 1.

¹⁴⁷ ----- . “Macedonia Is Greek,” *Danforth Voice*, no. 14, 27th February, 1992, 1.

to upset such a large ethnic community and Canada would not recognize the FYROM under its constitutional name until 2007.¹⁴⁸

The Greek community also initiated a consistent policy of protesting any attempt by the Macedonian community to represent a non-Hellenic Macedonian identity in the Canadian media. John Mylopoulos acknowledged that the Hellenic community in Toronto “complained every time the *Toronto Sun* publishes a one page ad paid by Slav-Macedonian associations, welcoming on behalf of “all Macedonians”, their bishop or politicians from back home. We have pointed to the *Sun* that the majority of Macedonians living in Toronto are Greek and are not represented by the associations paying for these ads.”¹⁴⁹ Thus, the Greek community wanted to indicate to the general public that the ethnic Macedonians did not represent the majority of the Macedonians in Toronto. Furthermore, the Greeks wanted to demonstrate that the ethnic Macedonians had much smaller numbers than they claimed. As John Mylopoulos noted: “We have, likewise, complained to the *Star* and the *Globe* every time they publish a story claiming that there are 100,000 Slav-Macedonians living in Toronto.”¹⁵⁰ The Greeks certainly wanted to diminish the number of Macedonian Canadians in Toronto, but as a matter of fact, the statistics were on their side. The 1991 Canadian Census registered 12,680 Ontarians with Macedonian as their mother tongue out of 12,815 Macedonians across Canada.¹⁵¹ John Mylopoulos also gave a very revealing example. In 1987, there were three heritage language classes in Toronto for Macedonians and 220 Greek language classes.¹⁵² Thus, even if one ignores the number of Macedonian Orthodox Churches

¹⁴⁸ -----, “Reuters: Canada Recognizes Macedonia under Disputed Name,” 20th September, 2007 [http://www.mhrmi.org/news/2007/constitutional_name01_e.asp].

¹⁴⁹ John Mylopoulos. “The Case against the State of “Macedonia,” *Danforth Voice*, no. 14, 27th February, 1992, 5A.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 5A.

¹⁵¹ -----, *1991 Census, The Nation: Mother Tongue* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1992), 18-19.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 5A.

and Canadian census data, the number of Macedonian heritage classes also indicated that the magic numbers of 100,000 or even 150,000 were pure propaganda and wishful thinking, generated by the Macedonian diaspora in its bid to boost its ethnic pride.

The Greek community, however, also went to extremes, particularly with its ethnonationalist claim that “the true Macedonians are for more than 3,000 years nothing else than Greeks.”¹⁵³ It was hard to believe that there was a direct continuity between the ancient Macedonians and the modern Greek nation, particularly after the numerous waves of resettlements and invasions in the region and the fact that many of the Greek residents of Aegean Macedonia were refugees from Asia Minor, who settled there in the first decades of the 20th century. It is also difficult to accept the idea that the ideology of nationalism, which emerged in the late 18th century, could hold together any community across time and space for more than 3,000 years. Ethnic nationalism, however, is still the dominant ideology among all Balkan historians and governments and very few intellectuals in the region dare to challenge it.


Despite its small numbers, the Macedonian diaspora used the strategy of active opposition against the Greek community, which could lead to a simmering conflict on the negative side, but on the positive side, this strategy could lead to more visibility of the Macedonian community in Canada. The Macedonian community continued its tradition in 1992 of organizing an anti-Greek demonstration every March and, as *Figure 10* on the next page indicates, the 1992 Macedonian demonstration was in front of the Ontario Legislature. Regardless of the sharp tone of the official poster of the planned demonstration, which asked not only for Canadian support and recognition of the FYROM but also denounced the Greek

¹⁵³ Alekos Kontonis. “True Macedonians Are Greeks-Letter to the Editor,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 90, 15th April, 1992, 3.

government policy in Aegean Macedonia, this demonstration did not turn violent. The Macedonian red flag with a golden lion, used on the placard of *Figure 10* is also quite interesting, because it is much more tolerable for the Hellenic community than the red flag with the ancient Hellenic symbol of the Star of Vergina, used since July 1992.

Figure 10- A Poster by the Macedonian Community in Toronto announcing the anti-Greek demonstration and appeal for the recognition of the FYROM in front of the Ontario Legislature building in Toronto on 29 March, 1992 (Source: Vražinovski, Tanas. *Organizacionata struktura na Makedonskoto iseleništvo vo Kanada*. [Organizational Structure of the Macedonian Emigration to Canada]. Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1994, 195).

MACEDONIAN COMMUNITY



APPEAL

FOR

**CANADIAN RECOGNITION
OF THE INDEPENDENT STATE
OF MACEDONIA**

- To support the oppressed minorities in Greece.
- To protest against the ruthless violations of the fundamental human rights in Greece.
- To denounce the policy of forced assimilation of the Macedonian and other ethnic minorities by the Greek Government.
- To bring an end to the Greek Government orchestrated and funded propaganda against the Macedonian Communities in Canada.

Since the unjust partition of Macedonia in 1913, Greece has been pursuing a policy of colonization and systematic denationalization and genocide of the native Macedonian People in Greek-occupied Macedonia.

Demonstrators will assemble in front of the Ontario Legislature Building at Queens Park (College St. and University Ave. in Toronto)

11 A.M.

SUNDAY MARCH 29TH, 1992

M.N.L.M. — CANADA

The peak of the Macedonian-Greek conflict was in November of 1992. The Macedonians wanted to use the first anniversary of the FYROM independence on 22 November 1992 to organize a parade and to raise the state flag of the FYROM in the city halls of North York and Scarborough, since these were neighbourhoods with a large concentration of Macedonian residents. The Macedonian community created a parade planning committee, which worked for months to prepare the Macedonian parade, which had to proceed along Yonge Street and finish with a Macedonian flag-raising ceremony at Nathan Philips Square. Fliers, which advertised the event, were distributed across southern Ontario and in the US cities around the Great Lakes. The Parade included hundreds of FYROM flags with the ancient Hellenic star of Vergina as well as actors dressed as Alexander of Macedon and his generals. This appropriation of ancient Hellenic symbols was a provocation to the Greek community, but the presence of large police forces prevented any incidents between the 12,000 Macedonian crowd and hostile Greeks.¹⁵⁴

The flag-raising ceremonies in North York and Scarborough, however, indicated that violence was not absent in Macedonian-Greek relations in Toronto. The Mayor of North York, Mel Lastman, gave his permission for the flag raising ceremony in front of city hall on 6 December 1992. Dr. Basil Soklaridis, President of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario and Dr. Athanasios Foussias, President of the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto, used the Greek radio program "Greek Melodies," aired on 4 December 1992 on CHIN radio station, to appeal to the Greeks in Toronto to prevent the Macedonian flag-raising ceremony in North York.¹⁵⁵ Answering this appeal, about 1000 Greeks gathered at

¹⁵⁴ Dragi Stojkovski. *Macedonian Telephone Directory and Yearbook 1993* (Toronto: Dragi Stojkovski, 1993), 124-6.

¹⁵⁵ Mary Dimitriou. "Lawful Macedonian Flag Raising Ceremony in North York Violently Disrupted by Greeks," *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 98, 15th December, 1992, 9.

Mel Lastman Square in North York on 6 December 1992 to prevent the raising of the FYROM flag. The Greeks protested against the ceremony and asked the police to cancel the event. The police officers called on Mayor Mel Lastman to calm the situation, which turned into a street battle between the Greeks and the Macedonian nationalists. The Greek nationalists, however, were so infuriated that the Mayor allowed this ceremony that when he came to the square, he was assaulted by the Greek crowd.¹⁵⁶ The Mayor was forced to cancel the ceremony due to the violence that erupted but the shameful behaviour of the Greek demonstrators discredited the image of the Greek community in Toronto. In fact, this act had a reverse effect on the Greek cause. Instead of being persuaded that all true Macedonians were Greeks, as the Greek diaspora hoped, Mel Lastman commented in front of a reporter that before that incident he “didn’t think there was any difference between Greeks and Macedonians but from now on I will know that Greeks and Macedonians are not one and the same people.”¹⁵⁷ The Macedonian Canadian, Dr. Andy Plukov, wrote an open letter to Mel Lastman regarding this incident, which raised very important questions, which touched upon both the Macedonian-Greek relations in Toronto and the very principles of Canadian multiculturalism. In his letter, Dr. Plukov asked: “What are we going to learn from this unfortunate event? Should we prevent all celebrations by the different ethnic groups that make up our multicultural society, or should we try to foster an environment where we can all celebrate our ethnic heritage within the framework of Canada, without any of the ancient hatreds that plague our old homelands?”¹⁵⁸ Indeed, this incident raised many important questions and challenges to the local authorities in Toronto and the Canadian multicultural

¹⁵⁶ Stojkovski. *Macedonian Telephone*, 128.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹⁵⁸ Andy Plukov. “Sad Day for Multiculturalism – Open Letter to Mel Lastman,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 98, 15th December, 1992, 11.

policies. The incident at Mel Lastman Square proved that the Canadian authorities should be aware of the rivalries and animosities among the various ethnic groups in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada so that they could take measures to prevent similar violent clashes.

The debate in Scarborough City Hall, whether or not to allow the Macedonian community a flag raising ceremony, went nowhere. During the two-day debates on 30 November and 1 December, the Macedonian community was represented by the lawyer Chris Pallier, Mary Dimitriou from the Macedonian Canadian Human Rights Committee, and Julie Blaževska, a student at the U. of Toronto. The Greek side, which opposed the Macedonian proposal, was represented by Dr. Athanasios Foussias, President of the Greek Community of Metropolitan Toronto and Dr. Basil Soklaridis, President of the Pan-Macedonian Association of Ontario. The heated debates between the two communities could not lead to a compromise so the city councillors decided to postpone the ceremony and the continuation of the debate for the end of January 1993.¹⁵⁹

The Greeks were satisfied with this postponement, whereas the Macedonians were very disappointed. The editor of *Makedonija/Macedonia*, Tanas Jovanovski was also frustrated that Dr. Basil Soklaridis, who was another Slavophone from Aegean Macedonia with a Greek national identity, represented the Greek community and thus, supposedly “betrayed” his “own” Macedonian community.¹⁶⁰ The larger problem, which emerged for the Macedonian community, however, was that the Greek community avoided appearing on scheduled talks with the Macedonian community. This strategy allowed the Greeks to postpone further any ethnic Macedonian events and the refusal to have contacts with any ethnic Macedonian organizations was also a demonstration that, as far as the Greeks were

¹⁵⁹ Tanas Jovanovski. “Vo tursko maalo ne se prži slanina,” [Don’t Fry Bacon in a Turkish Neighbourhood], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 98, 15th December, 1992, 1, 3.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

concerned, an ethnic Macedonian community did not exist.¹⁶¹ Instead of negotiating with the Macedonian diaspora, Dr. Basil Soklaridis preferred to appeal directly to the Mayor of Scarborough, Ms. Joyce Trimmer, to prevent the Macedonian demands. Dr. Soklaridis argued that even the European Community refused to recognize “this so called Republic of Macedonia on 28 June 1992.”¹⁶² Dr. Soklaridis failed to mention that it was primarily due to the Greek veto that the FYROM was not recognized with its constitutional name by the European Community. His arguments about the Macedonian provocations were quite reasonable. He pointed out that the United Macedonians Organization had an emblem with a map of Macedonia, including not only the FYROM but also the Bulgarian Pirin Macedonia and the Greek Aegean Macedonia. The United Macedonian logo was *Aegean, Vardar and Pirin*, which implied that the organization represented all geographic regions of Macedonia and its residents and it also posed a subtle irredentist claim.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, the arguments of Dr. Soklaridis demonstrated that the roots of the conflict were in the Balkans between Greece and the FYROM and not between their respective ethnic communities in Toronto and thus, he could not answer why this conflict had to be continued in Toronto and how it could be resolved.

Despite the perpetual resistance of the Greek diaspora for the recognition of the FYROM and its diaspora in Canada, by the middle of the 1990s the Greeks started to lose ground. Canadian politicians also became more reserved in their comments on the Macedonian issue. In September 1993, the Canadian Prime Minister infuriated the Macedonian community in Canada with the comment made in front of a Greek journalist

¹⁶¹ Tanas Vražinovski. *Organizacionata struktura na Makedonskoto iseleništvo vo Kanada*. [Organizational Structure of the Macedonian Emigration to Canada]. Skopje: Matica Makedonska, 1994), 204.

¹⁶² Dr. Basil Soklaridis. “This Is Your Doctor Talking- A Letter to the Mayor of Scarborough-Joyce Trimmer,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 98, 15th December, 1992, 7.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 7.

that: “Historically Macedonia belongs to Greece.”¹⁶⁴ This, however, was the last strong pro-Greek comment made by a Canadian politician. Even if the Macedonian diaspora was not numerous enough to be able to influence negatively the election campaign of Chrétien or any other politician, the Canadian support of Greece on the Macedonian issue became more subtle.

The two major organizations in the Macedonian diaspora – United Macedonians Organization and the Macedonian Human Rights Movement of Canada – concentrated their efforts in 1994-1996 on lobbying for the recognition of the FYROM by Canada and attempted to enter the Canadian Ethnocultural Council as a full member organization. There were only two incidents in 1994, which antagonized again the Greek and Macedonian immigrants to Canada. During a cultural event at the Scarborough Campus of the University of Toronto, members of the Association of Macedonian students were repeatedly photographed and asked for their surnames by Greeks, who told them that “things will change very quickly both for their group’s existence on campus and for the existence of the Macedonian language program at the University of Toronto.”¹⁶⁵ The other incident involved the Macedonian Canadian Tony Markovski, who was removed from participation at the Cornwall Cultural Festival in 1994 at the insistence of the Greek representatives at the festival.¹⁶⁶ These incidents, however, could not be viewed as a concentrated effort of the entire Greek diaspora. They were initiated by fervent Greek nationalists, who acted spontaneously. The Greek diaspora leaders, however, used all their influence to prevent the membership of the United Macedonians Organization in the Canadian Ethnocultural Council.

¹⁶⁴ Tanas Jovanovski. “Jean Chrétien: Historically Macedonia Belongs to Greece.” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 108, 15th October, 1993, 1.

¹⁶⁵ Spiro G. Kotsopoulos. “Macedonian Human Rights Movement of Canada Report,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 119, 15th September, 1994, 9.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

Membership in this council would mean that Macedonians had the prestige of one of the recognized Canadian ethnic groups and hence, the Hellenic Canadian Congress opposed the membership of any Macedonian organization. The Hellenic opposition delayed the United Macedonians membership for five years but in the spring of 1995, they managed to become members, despite the Greek opposition.¹⁶⁷ The Macedonian community perceived its membership as a major victory in its struggle for structural and ethnic recognition. Kosta Milankov, a member of the United Macedonians Organization noted that: “Now, we can all proudly say that we are Macedonians and nobody could tell us any more: “you are Greeks or Bulgarians!”¹⁶⁸

Thus, by 1995 the Greek diaspora in Canada lost the war which it had launched against the Macedonian community in Canada. The only consolation for the Hellenic diaspora was the victory of Greek diplomacy, which persuaded the FYROM government in September 1995 to remove the Ancient Hellenic Star of Vergina of the FYROM flag and to change Article 49 of the FYROM Constitution, which stipulated that the FYROM should be concerned with the “enslaved Macedonian people in Greece.”¹⁶⁹ The Macedonian diaspora in Canada, however, which was much more nationalistic than the politicians and the residents of the FYROM, was infuriated with this agreement. According to Tanas Jovanovski, the Macedonian community in Canada was “disappointed and aggravated with this agreement”, which he considered a “sell-out of the Macedonian national interests.”¹⁷⁰ Angry members of the community also wrote letters to the editor of the *Makedonija/Macedonia* to express their indignation with the communist government of the FYROM. Alex K. Gigeroff even appealed

¹⁶⁷ William Popovski. “United Macedonians Are In,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 128, 15th June, 1995, 1,3.

¹⁶⁸ Vražinovski. *Organizacionata struktura* [Organizational Structure], 205.

¹⁶⁹ Tanas Jovanovski. “Spogodba za razprodažba na Makedonski nacionalni interesi,” [Agreement for the Sale of the Macedonian National Interests], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 131, 15th September, 1995, 1.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

to all Macedonian immigrants in the world in his letter with the call: “Macedonians around the world need not give up the flag!”¹⁷¹ It was quite obvious that the Macedonian diaspora in Canada was much more determined than the FYROM government to steer an aggressive nationalist policy. The diaspora also expected that the Macedonian government should take into consideration the opinions of the Macedonian immigrants.

The Macedonian diaspora failed to influence the FYROM government but, inspired with its successes against the Hellenic diaspora, the Macedonian Canadians continued their lobbying for the Canadian recognition of the FYROM. Even the President of the First Macedonian Orthodox Cathedral St Clement of Ohrid, Nikola Stojanovski, wrote an open letter in March 1996 on behalf of the whole Macedonian diaspora in Canada to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Lloyd Axworthy, and carbon copies went to the Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and the Minister of National Defense, David Collenette with the appeal to the government of Canada to recognize the FYROM.¹⁷² On 3 July, 1996, Canada officially recognized Macedonia under its interim name the FYROM, because the Liberal cabinet of Jean Chrétien did not want to risk its relations with Greece and the large Hellenic community in Canada. It was not until 2007, when the Conservative cabinet of Stephen Harper would recognize the country under its constitutional name Republic of Macedonia, despite Greek opposition. Nevertheless, by 1996 the Macedonian diaspora in Canada managed to reach its primary goals and to neutralize the strong Greek opposition.

The Bulgarian opposition was much less visible due to the lack of a strong Bulgarian community in Toronto but in the period 1993-1996 the historical and linguistic debate

¹⁷¹ Alex K. Gigeroff. “Macedonians Around the World Need Not Give Up the Flag,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 132, 15th October, 1995, 2.

¹⁷² Nikola Stojanovski. “Open Letter to the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 137, 15th March, 1996, 11.

between the Macedonian and Bulgarian communities was revived. The debate was initiated again by the Toronto branches of the Macedonian Patriotic Organization (MPO) and its vehement Bulgarian nationalist leaders. In an open letter to the Macedonian diaspora, the Chairmen of MPO Lyuben Dimitroff, George Mladenov, the Secretary Atanas Delivanov and the Chairman of MPO Pobeda [Victory], Alexander Karadjov introduced again the traditional Bulgarian position that the Macedonian language was a Serbian invention. They also maintained that all Bulgarian revolutionaries from Macedonia, including Goce Delchev, Dr. Hristo Tatarchev, Pere Toshev, Todor Alexandrov and Ivan Mihailov used the terms 'autonomous Macedonia' or even 'independent Macedonia' as stages in the final unification of the Bulgarian nation.¹⁷³ This letter was a provocation to the Macedonians, because it was not realistic to believe that staunch Macedonian nationalists and former members of the Yugoslav Communist Party would remember their Bulgarian roots and would embrace a Bulgarian ethnic identity.

The response to the letter by Vele Aleksoski, a member of the United Macedonians Organization was very revealing. The Macedonian reply employed the traditional nationalist theories, which bordered on science fiction. Mr. Aleksoski asked why the Bulgarians called their organization 'Macedonian' if they had a Bulgarian identity, pretending that he was ignorant of the fact that, besides a nationality, Macedonian could also mean a geographic region and a regional identity. Thus, he indicated once again that the ethnic Macedonians also wanted to monopolize the use of the term Macedonian for themselves. Vele Aleksoski also claimed that the Bulgarians, as all other Slavic nations, were at least 13-14 centuries

¹⁷³ George Mladenov, Atanas Delivanov et al. "Open Letter to the Macedonian Diaspora," *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 110, 15th December, 1993, 3.

younger than the Macedonian nation.¹⁷⁴ After this unsubstantiated statement, Mr. Aleksoski also claimed that the Bulgarian Prince Boris accepted Macedonian Christianity and the Macedonian language and alphabet in the 9th century AD, so that the Bulgarians could rule easier over the Macedonians. This was the reason that the modern Bulgarian language was so close to the Macedonian language.¹⁷⁵

These arguments, however, reflected more the dreams of the Macedonian nationalists than any historical facts. In fact, the Macedonian nationalists quickly fell into a net of self-contradictions. The editor of the *Makedonija/Macedonia*, Tanas Jovanovski, announced the death of Blaže Koneski in December 1993, describing him as “the founder of the Macedonian literary language and grammar.”¹⁷⁶ It appeared that supposedly the oldest literary Slavic language, Macedonian, was founded by Blaže Koneski in the middle of the 20th century! It was also quite interesting that, despite the vehement rejections of the Macedonian community of all Bulgarian and Greek historical arguments, the Macedonian community embraced the book of Loring M Danforth *The Macedonian Conflict* almost as a Bible. The Macedonian media even published excerpts from the book. The U.S. anthropologist Loring M. Danforth, who dealt with the debate over Macedonia between the Greek and Macedonian diasporas in Australia was, indeed, quite impartial. The excerpts, which were published in the *Makedonija/Macedonia* newspaper, however, did not quite fit into the Macedonian nationalist framework. Danforth noted that: “In the 19th c. most Macedonians were illiterate peasants. If Slavic-speaking Christians in Macedonia were pressed to state their national identity, some of them would have said they were Serbs, many

¹⁷⁴ Vele Aleksoski. “Nedefinirani (ne) Makedonci,” [Unidentified (non) Macedonians]. *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 110, 15th December, 1993, 5.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁷⁶ Tanas Jovanovski. “Počina Blaže Koneski,” [Blazhe Koneski Passed Away], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 110, 15th December, 1993, 1.

would have said they were Greeks, but the majority of them would undoubtedly have said they were Bulgarians.”¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, Danforth noted that Tito created the Macedonian Republic within Yugoslavia to co-opt it efficiently in Yugoslavia and to “delegitimize both Serbian and Bulgarian claims to the area.”¹⁷⁸ Danforth presented an accurate analysis in order to show how the Macedonians emerged as an ethnic group, but it was rather surprising for the thesis author to see these excerpts of the book in a Macedonian Canadian newspaper, since these observations completely destroyed the Macedonian arguments for their 4,000 years of existence as a separate group and their strong national sentiments from the 19th century to the Second World War. Apparently, the Macedonian nationalists in Toronto read Loring M. Danforth quite selectively and they did not pay enough attention to his chapter on the history of Macedonia.

The Macedonian attitude towards the MPO was also very contradictory and confusing. On the one hand, the Macedonians complained that the MPO leader Ivan Lebamoff reaffirmed the official MPO position at the 1993 MPO Annual Convention in Toronto, which once again refused to acknowledge the existence of a Macedonian language, nation and church.¹⁷⁹ It was also quite embarrassing for the Macedonians to see that the special guests of the 1993 MPO Convention were Dr. Ivan Tatarchev, the grandson of Dr. Hristo Tatarchev (one of the founders of the IMRO-Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization in 1893) and Maria Koeva, who was the daughter of Todor Alexandrov, another legendary IMRO leader. Both Ivan Tatarchev, a Chief Prosecutor of Bulgaria and Maria Koeva seemed to know well their family history and the fact that their famous

¹⁷⁷ Loring M. Danforth. “Claims to Macedonian Identity,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 109, 15th November, 1993, 7.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁷⁹ -----.”MPO – Borba za dve Drzavi so ist narod” [MPO-A Struggle for Two Countries with the Same Nation], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 115, 15th May, 1994, 5.

predecessors were Bulgarian nationalists. Thus, the Macedonian Canadians blamed them for “serving the Bulgarian interests.”¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, Alexander Runtev argued in the same issue of the *Makedonija/Macedonia* that Ivan Lebamoff was a proud Macedonian and the MPO did not want to unite Macedonia and Bulgaria. These claims were supposed to be merely “Greek and Serbian propaganda.”¹⁸¹ The Macedonian diaspora seemed to be very confused and it developed a love-hate relationship with the MPO. On the one hand, the Macedonians wanted to renounce the pro-Bulgarian policies of the organization, its Bulgarian nationalism and the Bulgarian ethnic identity of its members. On the other hand, the Macedonian diaspora realized that this organization had a Macedonian name, which had to be exploited somehow to serve the Macedonian nationalist goals. It was hard to ignore the MPO, since the history of the Macedonian immigrants and the building of all Macedono-Bulgarian churches in Canada and the USA started with the efforts of the MPO. Thus, the Macedonians were quite motivated to use and abuse the MPO legacy, to dilute its Bulgarian character and even to misrepresent MPO documents as Macedonian documents, written in Macedonian, as they did in the Multicultural History Society of Ontario.

The 75th MPO convention in Detroit, MI in 1996 also stirred up Macedonian nationalist sentiments. Along the books for sale at the convention, which were written in Bulgarian, was a booklet which protested the inclusion of Macedonians as a separate ethnic group in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*.¹⁸² The inclusion of the Macedonians in this prestigious *Encyclopedia* heated up again the debate between the Bulgarian and Macedonian communities but the Bulgarian community and the MPO

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁸¹ Alexander Runtev, “Convention Guest Defends MPO,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 115, 15th May, 1994, 4.

¹⁸² Plamen Pirinski. “Macedonia For the Macedonians?” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 143, 15th September, 1996, 1.

particularly could not prevent its publication and this became another victory for the Macedonian community in North America.

Both the Greek and Bulgarian communities used numerous historical arguments to prove the manipulations and the abuse of their own historical past by the Macedonians. The Greek and the Bulgarian communities, however, were losing ground because they could not persuade the Canadian politicians and the general public that the lack of a Macedonian ethnic group in the past meant that such a group could not exist in the late 20th century. The Macedonians drew more political, academic and media sympathies for their cause, because they were perceived as a weak and small nation, and a victim of their stronger neighbours, the Greeks and the Bulgarians. The aggressive coercion and intimidation, which the Greek diaspora used in its relations with the Macedonian community additionally discredited the legitimacy of the Greek position on Macedonia. On the other hand, however, due to the increasing sympathies towards the Macedonian position, the Macedonian diaspora seemed to believe that public support towards its cause of recognition meant also a recognition of its historical arguments, which was far from the truth. Even prominent representatives of the North American academia, such as Loring M. Danforth, who argued that Macedonians exist as an ethnic group, and have the right to exist, did not forget to remind his readers that the Macedonians were a new ethnic group with Bulgarian roots.¹⁸³

The late 1980s and the early 1990s were the most turbulent years in the relations between the Macedonian community and its Bulgarian and Greek peers. This was the period in which the Macedonians wanted to take their place as a fully-fledged ethnic group in the Canadian mosaic. They demanded more visibility on the Canadian censuses, membership in

¹⁸³ Loring M. Danforth. *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 60.

the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, participation on cultural venues or more visibility and structural recognition. The Greeks and the Bulgarians wanted to prevent this development. The Greek and Bulgarian aggressive actions, as well as the heated debate over history and language, led to this inter-ethnic conflict. Once the Macedonians achieved their major goals, however, to get Canadian institutional recognition of their ethnic identity, as well as Canadian recognition of the FYROM in 1996, the Macedonian conflict wound down.

5.5: The Census Dispute

The Canadian censuses collect information on ethnic origin and mother tongue and this information has been used by various institutions as an official source on the ethnic groups in Canada. Thus, it became crucial for each ethnic group to boost its numbers on the Canadian census. On the other hand, many ethnic communities have blamed the Canadian authorities of attempting to manipulate the census results with confusing questions in order to diminish the number of their ethnic group. As Dr. Jim Karas noted, when a certain ethnic group has fewer members on the censuses, the government could refuse funding and other privileges to that particular community.¹⁸⁴ The Macedonian ethnic media also reminded its readers before the 1986 Census about “the potential benefits for our community if our number is higher.”¹⁸⁵ Thus, the collection of census information became a game of numbers between Statistics Canada and the various ethnic groups. As David Kertzer and Dominique Arel observed: “The census does much more than simply reflect social reality; rather, it plays

¹⁸⁴ Jim Karas, interviewed by the author, 6 June 2007.

¹⁸⁵ Tanas Jovanovski. “Sproti Popisot,” [The Census Is Forthcoming], *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 19, 15 May 1986, 1.

a key role in the construction of that reality.”¹⁸⁶ This was precisely the goal of the Macedonian diaspora in Canada, to prove to the Canadian authorities that it exists and to emerge as a factor in ethnic politics and multicultural programs. In order to achieve their goals, the Macedonians had to eliminate the Greek opposition and to rally as many Macedonian Canadians as possible for their cause.

Until 1981, Statistics Canada did not include the entries ‘Macedonian-mother tongue’ and ‘Macedonian-ethnic origin’ in its census questionnaires. This led the Macedonians to declare themselves as Yugoslavs on Canadian National Censuses from the late 1950s until the 1980s.¹⁸⁷ Since 1981 Statistics Canada tabulated figures for Macedonians as a separate ethnic group, but the category had to be written in the blank field of the questionnaire, rather than checked off on the form. The newly-formed Canadian Macedonian Census Committee raised its concerns to Statistics Canada about the lack of a check-marked option with the category Macedonian on the census forms in 1986.¹⁸⁸ This factor might look insignificant at first sight but it could influence the results. A good example is the ethnic category Canadian. Before its introduction by Statistics Canada, most Canadians would pick English, Scottish, French and other traditional ethnic groups. Since the introduction of the term Canadian on the 1996 Census forms, the number of people declaring Canadian ethnic origin has increased dramatically. The Greek community, however, preferred to keep the status quo and lobbied for the exclusion of “Macedonian” as an ethnic category in the preliminarily written options of the census forms. The leader of the Canadian Hellenic Congress, John Mylopoulos, argued that: “The word “Macedonian” is ambiguous and creates confusion. That’s why it should not

¹⁸⁶ David Kertzer and Arel, Dominique. *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 2.

¹⁸⁷ Vasiliadis, *Who Are You?*, 414.

¹⁸⁸ Vasil Zigomanov, “Canadian Macedonian Census Committee Meets Federal Officials.” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 24, 15 October 1986, 1.

be on the census; let people identify themselves as Greeks and Slavs.”¹⁸⁹ It was obvious that the Greek community wanted to keep the number of Macedonians as low as possible and to prevent them from using the term ‘Macedonian’ as an ethnic category. It was an unacceptable option for the Macedonians, however, to use the generic term ‘Slavs’, which refers to a number of separate ethnic groups.

Traditionally, Statistics Canada respected the ethnic affiliations of the Canadian citizens and it was not difficult for the Macedonian Canadian Census Committee to lobby successfully for the inclusion of “Macedonian” as both an ethnic group and a language on the census questionnaires. The mustering of 150,000 or even 80,000 respondents, who would check in “Macedonian” for both ethnic origin and mother tongue, appeared to be, however, an impossible task. In fact, only 11,500 Canadians opted to choose Macedonian as their ethnic origin on the 1986 Census.¹⁹⁰ The Macedonian Canadian Census Committee published instructions to all Macedonians in Canada on how to answer the 1986 Census questions related to ethnic origin and languages. A month before the June 3 Census, the announcement of the Committee appealed to the Macedonian Canadians: “Answer Macedonian to the following questions:

- A) What language you first learned in childhood and still understand?
- B) To which ethnic or cultural group(s) do you or did your ancestors belong?
- C) What language do you speak at home now?”¹⁹¹

The suggested answers were very manipulative, since all Slavic immigrants, who came from Macedonia before the 1960s had Bulgarian as their mother tongue. The ancestors of the

¹⁸⁹ Andre Picard. “Multicultural Community Split Over Wording of Census Form,” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 44, 15 June 1988, 5.

¹⁹⁰ -----, *Census Canada 1986. Language: Part I* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1987), 93.

¹⁹¹ Macedonian Canadian Census Committee. “To All Macedonians from the Macedonian Canadian Census Committee.” *Makedonija/Macedonia*, no. 19, 15 May 1986, 3.

immigrants from Macedonia considered themselves Bulgarians from Macedonia or Greeks from Macedonia but not simply Macedonians, because such an ethnic group did not exist before the end of the Second World War. The third question was a good example of another attempted manipulation. It is a well-known fact that in most communities, if not all, the second and third generation immigrants use predominantly or solely English for communication purposes in Ontario and elsewhere in English Canada. The Macedonian Canadian Census Committee, however, ignored the assimilation process because its priority was not the representation of the accurate number of Macedonian speakers, but rather the significant increase of the Macedonian respondents on the 1986 Census. It was also curious that the announcement also included with capital letters the message: "DON'T BE SCARED OR INTIMIDATED. ONLY STATISTICS CANADA WILL KNOW YOUR ANSWERS."¹⁹² This appeal reminded them about the conflict with the Greek community and the pressure, which both Greek Canadians and the Greek authorities applied on the Slavophones from Aegean Macedonia not to join the Macedonian community. Indeed, such political factors could influence the ethnic self-determination of some Aegean Macedonians on the census questionnaires. The German Canadians are a good example of an ethnic group, which dramatically shrank during the Second World War. On the 1941 Canadian Census the number of Dutch Canadians was suspiciously high and on the 1951 Canadian Census many Germans preferred to declare an Austrian ethnicity.¹⁹³ It is also possible that Macedonians, hired by Greek employers in Canada, as well as Macedonians with many relatives and property in Greece were influenced by the Greek policy of intimidation but the number of

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹³ Franz A.J. Szabo. *Austrian Immigration to Canada: Selected Essays* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 47.

these intimidated Macedonians is certainly not 120,000 as nationalists such as Dragi Stojkovski and Pete James Kondoff would claim.¹⁹⁴

The Macedonian nationalists also appealed to their peers not to declare a Greek Macedonian or a Bulgarian Macedonian identity, because Statistics Canada would count them as Greeks and Bulgarians in these cases. Once again, the Macedonian nationalists wanted to secure a monopoly on the term Macedonia and to prevent its use in a regional non-ethnic sense. The Macedonian nationalists also committed the same sin, which they blamed on the Greek and the Bulgarian communities and that is, the rejection of the right of each person to define freely an ethnic and linguistic identity. If a person born in the geographic region of Macedonia preferred to self-define as a Greek or Bulgarian, this person was viewed as a victim of the Greek or Bulgarian propaganda in the best case scenario but more often, the person was considered a traitor to Macedonia. This nationalist rhetoric increased the antagonism between the three Balkan communities, since nationalists born in Macedonia continued to occupy prominent positions in both the Greek and the Bulgarian diasporas.

The dispute over the census questionnaire in the late 1980s was crucial for both the Macedonian community and for the Hellenic nationalists in Canada. Nevertheless, the two communities did not clash. Both realized that it was more important to persuade the Canadian Government to accept their position rather than to argue with each other. A direct Macedonian-Greek dispute over the Canadian Census would be futile, since only Statistics Canada had the authority to change the status quo. The Greeks also realized that extensive communication with the Macedonian community would mean an acknowledgement on behalf of the Greek side that a Macedonian ethnic community existed in Toronto and they

¹⁹⁴ Dragi Stojkovski, interviewed by the author, 3 May 2007; Pete James Kondoff, interviewed by the author, 17 May 2007.

wished to avoid such a development. The decision of Statistics Canada to comply with the Macedonian demands also indicated that the Canadian authorities intended to continue the trend of respecting and accepting the ethnic affiliations of all Canadian citizens, even if these identities have recently emerged. This dispute, however, did not turn into a violent conflict between the two ethnic communities, because the Macedonians were satisfied with the favourable decision of Statistics Canada, whereas the Greeks were satisfied with the low number of Macedonian respondents to the Census. The lack of ancient Macedonian historic symbols and heritage involved in the census dispute also diffused the tension between the two communities.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the roots, causes and consequences of the heated debate on Macedonia and Macedonian ethnic identity in Toronto, which became a primary destination of immigrants from the geographic region of Macedonia since the beginning of the 20th century. The dissertation also revealed a number of misinterpreted and mistranslated historical documents, which obstructed unbiased research of this issue in Canada.

The debate on the origin, history, language and national identity of Macedonia and the Macedonians initially emerged in the Balkans and continued in Toronto due to the strict ethnonational interpretations of Macedonian history by the three sides involved in the dispute– Macedonians, Greeks and Bulgarians. All sides in the conflict attempted to monopolize the use of the terms ‘Macedonia’ and ‘Macedonian,’ which exacerbated the conflict.

The geographic region of Macedonia, which presently includes the territory of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) – known since the 19th century as Vardar Macedonia, northwestern Greece or Aegean Macedonia and southwestern Bulgaria, known as Pirin Macedonia, had a long and turbulent past with shifting rulers, territory and identities. The region was inhabited as early as the 11th and 10th centuries BC. During this period of large migrations within the territory of modern northwestern Greece and southern FYROM, the tribe of Macedones or Macedonians inhabited the area. The first Macedonian kingdom was founded by Perdiccas I in c. 700 BC, but the golden days of the ancient Macedonian statehood were under the rule of Philip II of Macedon (359-336 BC) and his son

Alexander III of Macedon (336-323 BC), who became known as Alexander the Great. The ancient Macedonians were influenced by non-Hellenic groups, particularly the Thracians, the Illyrians and perhaps others. Hence, initially they were considered foreigners by their Hellenic neighbours in the South. However, the ancient Macedonians adopted the Greek culture, names and language and by the 4th c. B.C. they were an integral part of the ancient Hellenic civilization. Archeologists discovered over 1400 ancient inscriptions, written in Greek by ancient Macedonian rulers.

After the Roman conquest in the 2nd century B.C., Macedonia was incorporated into the Roman Empire and, in 395 A.D., when the Roman Empire was divided into the Western and Eastern Roman empires, Macedonia was transferred to the control of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. The ancient Macedonians never spoke a Slavic language. In fact, when the barbarian invasions started in the 4th-7th centuries AD in the Balkans, the remnants of the Macedones and other Hellenes, who lived in Macedonia, were pushed to eastern Thrace, the area between Adrianople (presently the Turkish city of Edirne) and Constantinople. This area would be called the province (*theme*) of Macedonia by the Byzantines between 6th and 15th c. A.D., whereas the modern territory of the FYROM was included in the province (*theme*) of Bulgaria after the destruction of Samuil's Bulgarian Empire in 1014-1018. Thus, Macedonia shifted geographically hundreds of kilometers to the east.

By the middle of the 9th century, the Bulgarian prince Boris (852-889) joined most of the current geographic region of Macedonia to his Bulgarian state, except southern Aegean Macedonia and its capital of Salonica, which were under Byzantine rule. Since the 7th century A.D. the modern territory of the FYROM, which was virtually abandoned by its previous Hellenic settlers, was invaded and inhabited by Slavic and Proto-Bulgarian tribes. These settlements facilitated the incorporation of the lands into the emerging Bulgarian state.

During the 9th century A.D., which was the heyday of the First Bulgarian Empire, the city of Ohrid in Vardar Macedonia became an important Bulgarian cultural, religious and literary centre and preserved its importance in the next centuries to become known as the 'Bulgarian Jerusalem.' Furthermore, by the end of the 10th century A.D. the Bulgarian tzar Samuil turned Vardar Macedonia into the nucleus of his Bulgarian Empire. In 997, Ohrid became the residence of the Bulgarian Patriarchy and Pope Gregory V recognized Samuil as king of Bulgaria. Soon after the defeat of the Bulgarian army in 1014, the Byzantine Emperor Basil II of the Macedonian dynasty (976-1025), who became famous as *Bulgaroctonos* [Bulgar-slayer] incorporated all of Vardar Macedonia into the Byzantine Empire until 1185.

In the 12th century, during the rule of Kaloyan (1197-1207) and Ivan Assen II (1218-1241) all Macedonian lands except Aegean Macedonia were incorporated into the Second Bulgarian Empire. Aegean Macedonia became part of the Latin Kingdom of Salonica and ultimately the Latin Empire (1204-1261). By the late 13th century, the Macedonian lands switched rulers once again. In 1282, the Serbian king Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282-1321) conquered Skopje and in 1334, the greatest medieval Serbian ruler, King Stefan Dušan (1331-1346) conquered Strumica, Ohrid, Radovich and in 1346, Skopje became his capital. After the death of Stefan Dušan in 1346, his wife Helena of Bulgaria, a sister of the Bulgarian tzar Ivan Alexander (1331-1371) ruled southern Macedonia until 1359 and her court was based in the Aegean Macedonian city of Serres. In the period 1360s-1390s, the lands of Macedonia were divided into small principalities and kingdoms. The small Bulgarian and Serbian principalities in Macedonia, which were typical feudal formations, were powerless to prevent their incorporation into the Ottoman Empire by the end of the 14th century.

Under the *millet* system, based on religion, all Orthodox Christians in the Balkans became part of the *Rum millet*, under the spiritual guidance of the Greek patriarch. The Bulgarian Ohrid Bishopric continued to be an important institution for the preservation of the Slavonic language and culture in Vardar Macedonia until 1767, when it was abolished by the Sultan. The stamp of the 16th century Archbishop of Ohrid Gregorius, which is preserved in the Rumyantsev Museum in Moscow, had the motto: “By God's grace, of all Bulgaria and Justiniana Prima Ohrid Archbishop, Gregorius.”

During the Ottoman period, the name Macedonia was not used as a geographic or administrative term. However, the *Tanzimat* reforms of the Ottoman Empire coincided with the national awakening of the Balkan ethnic groups in the late 18th to mid-19th centuries. Thus, in the 19th century, the geographical term Macedonia emerged in the national rhetoric of Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian nationalists. According to the 1881 Ottoman Census, the total population of the three vilayets was 2,879, 634. These people belonged to a number of different ethnic and religious groups: Muslims, including Turks, Albanians and Pomaks, as well as Greeks, Slavs (including Bulgarians in the majority as well as a Serbian minority in the north), Jews, Vlachs, and Gypsies (Roma). Due to its central location, in the middle of the Balkan peninsula, Macedonia became one of the most contested regions in the Balkans. The future of Macedonia became known as “the Macedonian Question” in the 19th century and particularly after 1870, when the Bulgarian autocephalous church was re-created. History, linguistics, schools, church, armed bands and government propaganda were part of the arsenal of each of the involved Balkan countries.

The Bulgarian national awakening in the 19th century was initiated by nationalists from Macedonia, a fact that would become an important advantage for the Bulgarian national doctrine. The Sultan's *firman* (decree) of 1870 allowing the founding of a Bulgarian

autocephalous Exarchate, included in Article 10 the provision that the residents of a locality where two-thirds of the population chose the Exarchate could adhere to the Bulgarian Church. Initially only northeastern Macedonia was included in the jurisdiction of the restored Bulgarian autocephalous church, but after referendums in 1872 and 1874, 91% of the population of Skopje and 97% of the population of Ohrid voted for joining the Bulgarian Exarchate and thus, all of the territory of the modern F.Y.R.O.M. as well as Pirin Macedonia and northern Aegean Macedonia were included in the jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Exarchate.

After the church referenda in the 1870s, Macedonia could be divided into three zones. The northern zone from the Shar Mountains to the line Ohrid-Bitola-Strumica-Nevrokop in the south (i.e. the modern F.Y.R.O.M. and Pirin Macedonia) identified with the Bulgarian ethnicity and joined the Bulgarian Exarchate. The southern zone reached Thessaloniki-Serres and Drama in which the Greek-speaking population prevailed, whereas the middle zone included a mixture of Greek-speaking, Bulgarian-speaking, Vlach-speaking, Albanian speaking and Turkish-speaking inhabitants. Furthermore, when the Exarchate was founded, many non-Hellenic inhabitants of the southern zone, including ethnic Bulgarians and Arumanians (Vlachs) supported Hellenism and voted to stay within the jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarchate. Such people were called by the Bulgarian nationalists, *gârkomani* (literally Greek maniacs) and *patriarchists* (i.e. members of the Greek Patriarchate). The Bulgarian nationalists continue to consider the *patriarchists* as traitors. The Greeks referred to them as ‘Bulgarophone Greeks’ in the 19th century, whereas in the 20th century, they preferred to call them ‘Slavophone Greeks’ in order to prevent Bulgarian irredentist claims.

History played an important role in the Greek national doctrine, because Macedonia was both part of the ancient Macedonian Empire of Alexander the Great and the medieval

Byzantine Empire for a long time. Thus, the Greeks resurrected the name Macedonia in the 19th century as something that was inherent to the Greek national heritage and psyche. In order to boost their numbers, the Greek nationalists claimed that not only the *patriarchists*, but also all other inhabitants of Macedonia, including ethnic Albanians and Vlachs were proper Greeks. They ignored the fact that oftentimes these so called Bulgarophone Greeks, Vlachophone Greeks, and Albanian-speaking Greeks did not speak Greek and did not self-identify as Greeks.

The Serbs also claimed Macedonia in the late 19th century and attempted to lure the local Slavic population to their side. The Serbian government even financed the publication of a few books, which claimed the existence of a separate Macedonian ethnicity and language. Nevertheless, the Serbian propaganda was quite unsuccessful and the Serbs acknowledged it.

After the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), Macedonia was divided between Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government found in Pirin Macedonia a Bulgarian majority and a Greek minority, which was either forced to Bulgarianize or was transferred to Greece. The Greek government had to deal with a Greek majority in the southern parts of Aegean Macedonia and a Bulgarian majority in the north, some of whom migrated to Bulgaria, while the rest voluntarily or forcefully had to accept the Greek language and culture. The Serbian government had the cruellest policy with regards to Macedonia, which Serbia received after the Balkan Wars– Vardar Macedonia. The Serbian authorities forbade the local population from reading and writing in Bulgarian and to express their Bulgarian identity. The Serbian government even banned the name Macedonia and called the region Vardar Banovina [province]. The Serbian administration ejected the Bulgarian Orthodox clergy, closed all

Bulgarian schools, banned all publications in Bulgarian and changed all Bulgarian names of the local population into Serbian family names with -ić endings.

During the interwar period, except for a few Comintern activists who promoted the proclamation of separate Macedonian, Thracian and Dobrudjan nations, in the hope of joining these regions into a Balkan Soviet Federation, there was no Macedonian ethnic identity. 'Macedonian' continued to be a strictly regional and geographic term. After the Second World War, however, Tito realized that the interwar policy of violent Serbization was a complete fiasco. If Tito encouraged the Bulgarian identity, however, Bulgaria would continue with its irredentist claims. On the other hand, if Tito decided to upgrade the already existing regional Macedonian identity to a national identity, he could have the upper hand in the Balkans. Tito could claim Bulgarian and Greek territories (Pirin and Aegean Macedonia) under the pretences that he wanted to unite all Macedonians into one country. Thus, Tito was not concerned with the national identity of the Macedonian population. He merely wanted to dominate the Balkans. In order to achieve his goal, Tito and his followers in Vardar Macedonia proclaimed the foundation of a Macedonian Socialist Republic within Yugoslavia, a Macedonian ethnicity and a new Macedonian language, based on the local Bulgarian dialects and infused with Serbian terms. The resistance of the local intelligentsia was quickly eliminated. 100, 000 Macedono-Bulgarians were intimidated, interned and jailed during the Cold War for expressing their Bulgarian identity.

Nevertheless, by the 1960s the Macedonian identity was embraced by the local Slavic population and Macedonia even managed to achieve its own independent statehood in 1991 under the name Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Due to the late appearance of Macedonia as a modern nation-state as compared to its neighbours and its late linguistic codification and extremely close proximity between the Bulgarian and Macedonian standard

languages, Bulgarian and Greek authorities and scholars continue to deny the existence of a Macedonian ethnic identity. Government-controlled historiography was perceived and used as a weapon in the struggle to prove who deserved to be placed on the map as a nation and who did not. The belief that national and ethnic identities were fixed and existed unchanged for thousands of years led many Greek and Bulgarian scholars and linguists to attempt to demonstrate with archival sources that, since in the 10th or 19th century, a Macedonian nation did not exist, and therefore, it could not exist at the present. Following the same ethnonational dogma that ethnic/national identity is something primordial and almost eternal, Macedonian historians projected the history of the young Macedonian nation as far back as Ancient Macedonia. The ancient Macedonian heritage became the cornerstone in the Greek-Macedonian conflict. The interest in the ancient Hellenic state of Alexander the Great, however, is not a scholarly one but is rather dictated by the nationalist agendas of Greece and the FYROM. Greek scholars continue to believe that if they prove the Hellenic character of Ancient Macedonia, this fact would automatically prove the nonexistence of a modern Macedonian nation. On the other hand, Macedonian historians concentrated their efforts on refuting and disproving the Hellenic identity of the ancient Macedonians, which in their view had to demonstrate the direct continuation between ancient Macedonia and modern FYROM. Similarly, the Macedonian historians attempted to appropriate after the Second World War all medieval and 19th century Bulgarian rulers, intellectuals, revolutionaries and other historic figures in order to prove the continuity of the Macedonian nation and language until the present. This led to numerous falsifications and mistranslations of primary historical sources.

The historical debate among the three countries with the goal of proving or negating the existence of a Macedonian ethnic identity indicates that, while the Macedonians deny their non-Macedonian past, both the Bulgarians and the Greeks deny the Macedonian present

of the FYROM. However, the Macedonian nation-building process is ongoing, not only due to the Greek and Bulgarian anti-Macedonian policies, but also because of the resistance of the large Albanian minority in the FYROM, which refuses to embrace the idea of an ethnic Macedonian state and identity.

The development of Macedonian national identity is also very intriguing from a theoretical viewpoint. On the one hand, according to the theory of nationalism, Macedonians are an ethnonational group, because they have a common name, common territory and language, shared past and they are willing to constitute a nation. In fact, they also have their own state since 1991. On the other hand, all these markers of national identity seem to be very fragile and volatile in the Macedonian case. The common name, which unites an ethnic group, should always be preserved by all members in order to secure the survival of their group, unless they negotiate a new name, e.g. the Boers redefined themselves as Afrikaners, the Gypsies as Roma/Romany, etc. The Macedonians are willing to preserve their ethnic group name but it is so persistently contested by Greece that they might have to change it at least partially due to this external pressure. The territorial sovereignty of the FYROM is ruptured by the strong Albanian autonomy in the western parts of the country, which turned the FYROM since 2001 into a country that resembles more of a federal multiethnic state than of a unitary ethnic one. The Macedonian and the Bulgarian languages form the same dialect continuum and the Macedonian language continues to be linguistically a variety of the Bulgarian pluricentric language even after more than 60 years of independent development and emerging linguistic differences. Nevertheless, as the cases of Portugal/Brazilian Portuguese, US/British English, and Sweden-Swedish/Finland-Swedish demonstrated, a linguistic variety/dialect is a sufficient marker to a separate group identity. Thus, the Macedonian linguistic standard can provide a clear marker of the Macedonian group.

However, 30 percent of the FYROM population prefer to use the Albanian language as a medium of communication. The domestic debate over the Macedonian past is also continuing. Do the roots of the Macedonian nation go back to ancient Macedonia of Phillip and Alexander the Great?! Are the roots in the Slavic tribes that came in the 6th-7th centuries, or maybe at the beginning of the 19th century, in 1903, or even in 1944? These questions are still open and unresolved to many Macedonians regardless of the government propaganda and the large Albanian minority, which is usually ignored in this debate. Due to the isolation of the ethnic Albanians and the continuing external pressure from Greece on the FYROM, the future of the other important group marker– the Macedonian state continues to be unclear. The only visible marker of a separate ethnonational group seems to be the belief of the Macedonians that they constitute and should constitute a nation. Economic stagnation, however, forces thousands of Macedonian citizens to apply for Bulgarian citizenship each year. The number of pro-Bulgarian intellectuals and even politicians is also increasing and they might erode this desire for statehood in the future. All these factors indicate that Macedonians continue to be a quasi-national group, which is still forming its national identity, similar to the Moldovans and the Taiwanese.

Due to this complex historical and political development of the Macedonian region the immigrants who came to Toronto from this part of the Balkan peninsula developed three distinct identities: Bulgarian, Greek and Macedonian, as well as at least three different meanings of the terms ‘Macedonia’ and ‘Macedonian.’ Two of these identities are regional: Macedono-Bulgarian, which denotes an ethnic Bulgarian from Macedonia and Greek Macedonian, which refers to two sub-groups: ethnic Greeks from Macedonia as well as ethnic Bulgarians/Slavs from Aegean Macedonia, who self-identify as Greeks and are also

known as *patriarchists*, *Grkomani* and *Slavophones*. The third group, which indicated its presence as late as the 1960s, developed a genuine ethnic Macedonian identity.

Ethnic identity formation among immigrants from Macedonia to Canada followed to a large extent political developments in the Balkans. Thus, from the late 19th century until the end of the Second World War, only Macedono-Bulgarians and Greek Macedonians emerged in Canada as part of the Bulgarian and Greek ethnic communities in Toronto. In fact, the Macedono-Bulgarians were the trailblazers and founders of the Bulgarian ethnic community in Toronto and all its institutions. The first Macedono-Bulgarians came to Canada from the Aegean part of Macedonia, present-day Northern Greece. They came from villages around the cities of Kostur (Kastoria) and Lerin (Florina). The Macedono-Bulgarian churches served the community in Bulgarian and the parishioners founded Bulgarian schools and cultural and mutual benefit societies and newspapers, which kept their records in Bulgarian. Only in the 1930s, did pro-communist emissaries try to establish a genuine ethnic Macedonian community but their attempts failed due to resistance by the older generation of immigrants led by the MPO and the Bulgarian Orthodox priests, who had a very strong Bulgarian ethnic identity.

During the Cold War, Macedonian identities in Toronto crystallized in their present form. They included not only the regional Macedono-Bulgarian and Hellenic Macedonian identities but also the new ethnic Macedonian identity. It started to emerge in the 1940s and gained momentum in the 1960s with the first mass influx to Toronto of Macedonian immigrants from Yugoslavia, when Tito opened the Yugoslav borders. Immigration from Greece, including Aegean Macedonia, also increased after the Second World War, whereas immigration from Bulgaria was almost nonexistent, due to the strict border control of communist Bulgaria.

The presence of three ethnic communities, which had completely different views of Macedonia and Macedonian identity inevitably led to a clash, which was encouraged by the Yugoslav, Greek and Bulgarian diplomats and security services during the Cold War. Similar to the conflict over Macedonia in the Balkans, the three ethnic communities in Toronto attempted to monopolize the use of the terms 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' as an integral part of their national heritage, which became the root of the conflict. To the Greek community, only the ancient Macedonians could be called Macedonians and currently only ethnic Greeks from Aegean Macedonia could use the term to refer to their region of origin. The Bulgarian Canadians also maintained that Macedonian was merely a geographic term, which could mean Bulgarian or Greek from Macedonia. Both communities continue to claim that, since Macedonia is a geographic region in both Greece and Bulgaria, 'Macedonian' cannot denote a separate ethnicity. On the other hand, the ethnic Macedonians also attempted to monopolize the term Macedonia arguing that 'Macedonian' cannot mean anything but an ethnic affiliation. They refuse to recognize that 'Macedonian' can refer to a geographic and regional non-ethnic identity.

From the 1950s until the 1980s, the major rival of the ethnic Macedonian community and Macedonian nationalism became the Bulgarian ethnic group. The two communities clashed over the history, heritage and language of both Macedonia and the pre-WWII immigrants from Macedonia, the local Macedono-Bulgarian Orthodox churches in Toronto and the legacy of the old pre-war Bulgarian immigrants from Macedonia. Unfortunately for the new ethnic Macedonian community, the older generation immigrants were firm Bulgarian nationalists and all religious, cultural and political organizations until the end of the Second World War used Bulgarian and English as their languages. Furthermore, even after the codification of the Macedonian language in 1944-1945, the three Macedono-

Bulgarian churches in Toronto and the Macedonian Patriotic Organization (MPO) refused to accept the new language and ethnicity and continued to use the standard Bulgarian language and to declare a Bulgarian ethnicity even in the 1990s. This led to numerous clashes between the Macedono-Bulgarians and the ethnic Macedonians. However, in order to attract Canadian academics to their side, the ethnic Macedonians went even further. The Macedonians targeted the Bulgarian and Greek collections of the Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO) and literally turned it into a collection of 'primary Macedonian historical documents' related to the non-existent ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto before the Second World War. One of the major contributions of this dissertation is that it revealed numerous misplaced primary sources as well as mistranslated historical documents, which appeared in the Macedonian collection of the MHSO instead of the Bulgarian and the Greek collections.

In the mid-1980s, the conflict between the Macedonian and the Greek ethnic communities intensified and escalated even further in the 1990s. The death of Tito led to a rise of ethnic nationalism in Yugoslavia, as well as to the weakening of Yugoslavism and Yugoslav influence over the ethnic Macedonian organizations abroad. The United Macedonians Organization in Toronto started to proclaim vehemently its Macedonian national character. The major Greek nationalist organization in Toronto – the Pan-Macedonian Association – on the other hand, denied the existence of a separate Macedonian ethnicity. Both organizations managed to rally thousands of supporters to their cause and attempted to raise the awareness of the Canadian public to the issue and to attract prominent Canadians to their side.

The late 1980s and the early 1990s were the most turbulent years in the relations between the Macedonian community and its Bulgarian and Greek peers. This was the period

in which the Macedonians wanted to take their place as a fully-fledged ethnic group in the Canadian mosaic. They demanded more visibility on the Canadian censuses, membership in the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, participation in cultural venues or more visibility and structural recognition. The Greeks and the Bulgarians wanted to prevent this development. Greek and Bulgarian aggressive actions, as well as the heated debate over history and language, led to this inter-ethnic conflict. Once the Macedonians achieved their major goals, however, to get Canadian institutional recognition of their ethnic identity, as well as Canadian recognition of the FYROM in 1996, the Macedonian conflict subsided.

Nevertheless, the conflict will not disappear unless all three sides recognize the existence of three different Macedonian groups in Toronto and admit that the two regional Macedonian identities and the ethnic Macedonian identity can co-exist and they do not negate one another. In fact, on an individual level such recognition and respect does exist. However, the ethnic organizations of the three communities will not easily accept a policy of an official recognition of the status-quo, because they are under the influence of the “old guard” staunch nationalists and the external influence of their governments, which support these aggressive nationalist positions.

The conflict over Macedonian identity in Toronto also demonstrates that the official Canadian federal policy of multiculturalism and tolerance towards all cultures and ethnicities does not prevent or solve the pre-existing ethnic conflicts in the Old World. Quite the contrary, the ethnic rivals use the liberal Canadian laws to promote their agendas, to falsify historical sources, to collect information and spy on Canadian citizens and sometimes even to intimidate, threaten and assault their ethnic archenemies in Canada. Thus, it is important for both academia and Canadian federal institutions to study the roots of these ethnic conflicts.

This thesis illustrated the late emergence of an ethnic Macedonian community in Toronto and the roots of the clash between the Macedonian, Greek and Bulgarian ethnic communities. However, the scope of this dissertation also has some limitations, which have to be overcome with future studies. Further research on the Slavophone Greeks in Canada is quite necessary, both because this group has been largely ignored, and the fact that many Slavophones continue to experience immense pressure about what ethnic identity they should declare. The opening of the archives of the former communist security services could also reveal valuable information about the methods and operations, which the Yugoslav and Bulgarian security services used to deal with Balkan immigrants and their organizations in Canada. The Cold War period and the role of diplomats and security services in the ethnic communities in Canada deserve more attention. In fact, the history of Bulgarian and Macedonian communities in Canada has been largely neglected, and deserves more attention.

APPENDIX 1

SPELLING OF GEOGRAPHIC AND PERSONAL NAMES

Greek personal names and geographic terms have been transliterated into English using the ISO [International Standard Orthography] 843: 1997, which is the standard international system for transliteration of the Greek alphabet into Roman letters. The only exceptions are the cities of Athens and Salonica, which are already standard names in the English language, much more popular than their Greek equivalents- Athina and Thessaloniki. Serbian names have been transliterated according to the Croatian Latin script, i.e. with ć, č (as ch in 'change'), š (as sh in 'shine'), ž (as to ge in 'beige'), j (as y in 'bay'), and dj (as j in 'joy'). Albanian, Turkish, German and other names, written in Latin scripts are left with their original spellings. Bulgarian names have been transliterated using the present Bulgarian state standard, i.e. sh in Bulgarian terms is equal to the English sh in 'show,' ch is the same as the English ch in 'chapter,' zh corresponds to the English s in 'vision' and y corresponds to y in 'may.' The only special character used is â, which is pronounced as the English u in 'burn.' The Macedonian terms have been transliterated using the Macedonian Roman script, which is the same as the Serbo-Croatian Latin standard. The only two different letters are kj and gj, which correspond to ky, gy in English, i.e. they should be pronounced softly. Most Macedonian geographic names have different names in Greek and Bulgarian/Macedonian. Thus, the place names have been written in the form accepted by the modern state to which they now belong. Alternative versions are given in brackets, particularly to Greek cities, e.g. Salonica (Solun in Bulgarian/Macedonian), Kastoria (Kostur in Bulgarian/Macedonian), Edessa (Voden), Kilkis (Kukush), Florina (Lerin), etc. The biggest issue, however, was with the transliteration of personal names, claimed by both Bulgaria and Macedonia. Since, the

Macedonian literary language appeared in 1944 and the 19th century historic figures (Miladinov, Delchev, Shapkarev and many others) had a very strong Bulgarian ethnic identity, their names have been transliterated according to the Bulgarian state standard, i.e. Delchev and not Delčev.

APPENDIX 2

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Arumanian – called also Vlach, kutsovlach, tsintsar. A member of a minority in Macedonia, speaking a dialect of Romanian. The urban Arumanians were usually pro-Greek.

ASNOM – Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation of Macedonia.

AVNOJ – Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia.

Bългарoman – a Bulgarian term, referring to people with non-Bulgarian origin (usually Arumanian), who are pro-Bulgarian and consider themselves Bulgarians.

BMORK – Bulgarian Macedonian Adrianople Committee.

Bugaraš – a Serbian and Macedonian term, referring to Slavic inhabitants of Macedonia with Bulgarian national consciousness.

Cheta – South Slavic term for a rebel band of at least 10 men.

Grekomani/gârkoman/grkoman – a person with Bulgarian/Macedonian, Arumanian or Albanian origin, who is pro-Greek and considers himself/herself to be part of the Greek nation.

FYROM – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

KKE – Communist Party of Greece.

MPO – Macedonian Political Organization (after 1956 Macedonian Patriotic Organization)

NOF – People's Liberation Front.

SNOF – Slavic National Liberation Front.

Sârboman – a Bulgarian term for a person from Macedonia with Bulgarian ethnic origin, who is pro-Serbian and believes to be part of the Serbian nation.

VMRO [IMRO] – Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization.

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