

6 National Awakening and National Identity (1814–1913)

Historiography

The national awakening and the formation of the Macedonian national identity formed a complex and turbulent process. They covered more time than those of most, if not all, the other “small,” “young” nations in Europe and continued until the mid–twentieth century. They also engendered far greater controversies and debates than most, if not all, other nationalisms in eastern Europe, and they continue still in both politics and scholarship.

The protracted and violent struggle over Macedonia and the intense hatreds and antagonisms that it generated influenced and came to dominate the writings of both scholars and publicists in and outside the Balkan Peninsula. Hence, most of the literature on the Macedonian question, though vast, tends to be biased and tendentious, and even the scholarly works are of uneven and dubious quality and value. Moreover, the latter are of little use for the study of Macedonian nationalism. Many treat the Macedonian question as solely a European or Balkan diplomatic issue; bourgeois historians and publicists who concentrate on the question’s internal aspects view it in the light of the competing states’ interests and claims and define it as strictly a Bulgarian, Greek, or Serbian problem.

These scholars reflect closely the views of their respective ruling

elites and thus their official nationalist ideologies. Since these in turn deny the existence of a distinct Macedonian ethnic entity, nationality, or nation, such writings cannot acknowledge, let alone consider, any expression of authentic Macedonian identity, and thus they do not study Macedonian nationalism or nationalisms in Macedonia. Rather, they look uncritically at the propaganda and armed activities of their respective Balkan nationalisms struggling for the hearts and minds of the Macedonian population. At best, they rationalize their respective national interventions and ambitions in Macedonia; at worst, they justify Balkan nationalist irredentism and imperialism.¹

Needless to say, some writings challenged the neighbors' nationalist ambitions. The Austrian Karl Hron² and the Bessarabian Bulgarian Petar Draganov,³ among others, argued before 1900 that the Macedonians constituted a distinct Slav ethnic group with all the necessary cultural attributes for nationality. Before 1914, many left-wing publicists in Balkan Social Democratic parties grasped the reality of Macedonian political consciousness and asserted Macedonians' right to self-determination. Between the wars, their successors, the Balkan Communist parties, recognized the existence of an ethnic Macedonian nation as well.⁴ All in all, however, such views could not compete with the nationalist ideologies emanating from Balkan capitals.

Finally, there were Macedonians—a few scholars and many publicists and spokespeople for the national and revolutionary movements—who attempted to present and interpret their people's past and present on a Macedonian basis. However, their task was difficult: they lacked material means, and Ottoman authorities pursued and prosecuted them (until 1912), as did nationalist proponents and defenders in the neighboring Balkan states. Consequently, many of their writings never surfaced. Their publications often provoked denunciation or quick suppression; their newspapers and periodicals usually had short lives. Their writings constitute superb historical sources and are invaluable for the student of Macedonian nationalism and history. Very little of this work, however, represents scholarly investigation of either field.⁵

The systematic and scholarly study of the history of the Macedonian people began more recently, with creation of the Macedonian republic in the Yugoslav federation in 1944. The Macedonian Marxist historiography in Yugoslavia accomplished a great deal but focused on socialist and revolutionary traditions and on social and economic conditions in

Macedonia. The study of nationalism—the national awakening, the development of Macedonian thought, and the formation of Macedonian identity—did not attract much serious attention until the 1960s.⁶ This was only partly the result of the federation’s ideological, political, and national considerations and sensitivities. A serious practical difficulty confronts the student of Macedonian national history: scarcity of sources.

A vast amount of the requisite material is in archives, collections of manuscripts and rare books, and libraries outside the republic of Macedonia: in capitals of the former and present great powers of Europe, especially Russia, and, most important, in Balkan capitals, especially Sofia. Western archives, as well as those of Serbia/Yugoslavia, are almost completely open for research on Macedonia. The Greek archives and those of the patriarchate in Constantinople remain almost totally inaccessible for such investigation.

The Bulgarian archives and libraries, with by far the richest collections on the development of Macedonian nationalism, became and remained open while Bulgaria recognized (1944–early 1950s) the existence of the Macedonian nation. They were readily available until Yugoslavia’s expulsion from the Communist bloc in 1948 and somewhat so during the “thaw” in Yugoslav–Soviet bloc relations in the late 1950s and early 1960s. After 1948, the Bulgarian Communist Party gradually shifted from recognition to negation and closed the archives and other major institutions to Yugoslav researchers, though keeping them open somewhat to others.

The Soviet archives—the richest non-Balkan source on Macedonia—became easily accessible to Yugoslav historians after 1956 and up to the late 1960s. Thereafter, cooling Yugoslav–Soviet relations and possibly Bulgarian pressure led to severe restrictions on research relating to Macedonia.⁷ More recently, since the fall of Communism in 1990–91, Bulgaria and particularly Russia seem to have been relaxing such policies.

This chapter presents what historians now know about the emergence of Macedonian nationalism between about 1814 and about 1870, and it outlines the major paths to Macedonian nationhood that developed and attracted Macedonians between 1870 and 1903—the year of the Ilinden Uprising—and beyond.

Early Macedonian Nationalism (to 1870)

The examination of Macedonian nationalism is still in its early stages. Nonetheless, work to date makes it possible to survey and appraise its development and to relate it to Balkan nationalism and the Slav awakening and to the historical experiences of the other “small,” “young” eastern European nations.

The national development of the Macedonians started later and trailed behind that of the Greeks, Serbs, and Bulgarians. The explanation lies substantially in Macedonia’s geographic location. Macedonia did not have any direct land contact or common border with any western European land, and the Aegean littoral had mostly Greek inhabitants. Nationalist ideas reached the Macedonians mainly through Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria.

As well, Macedonia was strategically crucial to the Ottoman empire and close to its center of power. The imperial authorities maintained a strong military presence there and, in case of unrest, could easily dispatch reinforcements to restore order. For the same reason, they settled many Turks and other Muslims in Macedonia, controlled the towns, and relegated Macedonians to isolated rural areas far more than they did people in other, more distant and strategically less important Balkan lands.

Otherwise, Macedonian national development generally resembled the process in neighboring Balkan nations. And it was almost identical to that in the other “small,” “young” nations of eastern and even western Europe. The Macedonians shared, especially with the latter, certain attributes, certain “disadvantages,” at the time they first experienced the force of nationalism: they all lacked a continuous historical state, a distinct church, a continuous and distinct literature, a cultural or political elite, and clearly defined historical boundaries and ethnic territory. Finally, and most important, they possessed no distinct ethnic name that would have clearly distinguished, dissociated, them from peoples with which they had in the distant past shared common experiences and traditions, which the others in the modern period appropriated. The Greeks put forth exclusive claims to the heritage of Byzantium; the Bulgarians, to that of their first and second empires and even of Samuel’s “Macedonian kingdom”; and the Serbs, to that of Stephen Dušan’s empire.

Needless to say, the Macedonian case also exhibited many particularities. Most of these, however, were the result of its specific circum-

stances and environment. The other Balkan peoples, though the Albanians less so than the rest, emerged as nations with the aid of their own state, church, and educational and cultural institutions and organizations. They frequently helped each other's cause and derived cultural aid and benefited from some or all of the great powers' open and direct diplomatic and military intervention. The Macedonian movement, in contrast, developed without a formal institutional base or infrastructure and without external aid and support. Indeed, the Macedonians had to fight for survival not only against the Ottoman empire, but also, and much more difficult, against their Balkan neighbors and their great-power patrons.

The first stage in the Macedonian awakening, from about 1814 to 1870, shows no dominant tendency or prevailing national consciousness. From the appearance of Joakim Krčovski's work, the first known printed book in the Macedonian language in 1814,⁸ up to about the Crimean War (1854–56), Slav consciousness was on the rise, and we could label the era a "Slav phase." It expressed itself in scattered stirrings of the native population against the Patriarchist church and against the total domination of the Greek language in local schools and churches under its control. Macedonians worked for local community schools and churches and the introduction of the local speech (*narodna jazik*) in both. Since there were few schoolbooks in that language, and producing the writings of Joakim Krčovski, Kiril Pejčinović, and Teodosij Sinaitski was prohibitively expensive, most books for the new schools, as well as many teachers, came at first from Serbia and, after the mid-1840s, from Bulgaria, which had formed its own literary language by then.

The first generation of the Slav-Macedonian intelligentsia led these unorganized and uncoordinated stirrings of Slav consciousness. The most outstanding figures were Jordan Hadži Konstantinov-Džinot, the brothers Dimitar and Konstantin Miladinov, Kiril Prličev, and Rajko Žinzifov. All of them studied in Greek schools, but later had contact with the Slav world of Serbia, Bulgaria, or Russia and de-Hellenized themselves. Their writings, together with those of some of their predecessors, laid the foundations of a Slav-Macedonian literary tradition.⁹

However, neither they nor the population at large yet had a clearly defined national or territorial consciousness or a sense of belonging. While travelling through Macedonia in 1854, Hadži Konstantinov-Džinot reported to *Tsargradskii vesnik*, the leading Bulgarian newspaper, that he arrived in the "Bulgarian-Serbian city Skopje in Albanian Mace-

donia, where [they] speak the Slav (Bulgarian-Serbian) language.”¹⁰ And on 8 January 1861, K. Miladinov wrote to the Bulgarian awakener G. Rakovski to explain his use of the term “Bulgarian” in the title of his and his brother’s collection of Macedonian folk songs: “In the announcement I called Macedonia West Bulgaria (as it should be called) because in Vienna the Greeks treat us like sheep. They consider Macedonia a Greek land and cannot understand that [Macedonia] is not Greek.”¹¹ Miladinov and other educated Macedonians worried that use of the Macedonian name would imply attachment to or identification with the Greek nation.

The Macedonians referred to themselves by a confusing and changing mixture of names. To the extent that they transcended local, regional labels (Bitolčani, Kosturčani, Prilepčani, and so on), people identified themselves as Orthodox Christians and Slavs. Another popular term was *giaur* (infidel), the demeaning name that the Ottoman authorities applied to them. But they sometimes used the names of the neighboring peoples whose medieval dynastic states ruled Macedonia.

The label “Greek,” more or less the official one for Orthodox Ottoman subjects, came from the Greek-controlled Patriarchist church. Until the mid-nineteenth century, most affluent Macedonians tended to regard themselves, especially abroad, as Hellenes, for reasons of both prestige and material gain and well-being.

With the Slav awakening in Macedonia, however, “Greek” began to lose some of its glamour and went into a gradual but continuous decline. “Serbian” was common among individuals and small groups in certain regions. Until adoption of “Macedonian” as a national name and symbol in mid-century, “Bulgarian” seemed to predominate, especially in religious and monastic institutions. According to Krste P. Misirkov, the ideologue of Macedonian nationalism about 1900, “Bulgarian” was a “historical relic”;¹² Byzantine Greeks first applied the term to them, the Ohrid archbishopric preserved it, and Macedonians adopted it to differentiate themselves from Greeks. It did not imply unity or community with the real Bulgarians: between the 1820s and the 1840s, the Macedonians had very little contact with them, knew even less about them, and called them “Šopi.” In any event, except for “Slav” (a national name, self-identification, and self-ascription), these labels came from other people, had no roots in popular tradition, and did not denote and carry any sense of national consciousness.¹³

As we saw above, the Crimean War, which reactivated the Eastern Question, also renewed interest in the future of the “sick man of Europe.” This was true of the great powers, but even more so of the Balkan peoples, who, to prepare for partition of the Ottoman empire, began to organize and to work more systematically in the empire’s Orthodox areas, which centered on Macedonia. The long-standing and solid Greek presence was now facing a vacillating challenge from Serbia and a much more determined approach by the Bulgarian national movement. The latter was becoming confident and strong at home, as well as in Constantinople, Romania, and Russia, and had the backing of Russia’s diplomacy.

The intensified general interest—no longer just educational in Macedonia—put educated Macedonians in closer contact especially with their Slav neighbors and awakened their interest in themselves and concern for their future. Since they knew of the weak Slav awakening in Macedonia, they tended to join forces, as junior partners, with the Bulgarians in a common struggle against well-entrenched Hellenism. Such a united effort seemed only natural: the two peoples shared linguistic affinity, some historical traditions, and Greek cultural domination, and they were the only Orthodox Christians still under Ottoman rule. As a result of this situation, the Bulgarian national idea made major inroads in Macedonia. Many formerly Greek positions went to Bulgarian patriots or to Macedonians who studied in Bulgarian schools in the Ottoman empire or in Russia. There was an influx into Macedonia of Bulgarian schoolbooks, newspapers, and teachers, and use of the Bulgarian language started in schools and churches.

These activities, which aimed to entrench the Bulgarian national idea in Macedonia, provoked a considerable reaction in the 1860s. Educated Macedonians embraced the name of their land as a national name and symbol and rose in defense of Macedonian interests. They argued—and the Bulgarian press condemned them—that “a Bulgarian and a Bulgarian language was one thing and a Macedonian and a Macedonian language something else.” They insisted that it was necessary “to protect the Macedonian youth,” who “should be taught and should develop exclusively in the Macedonian speech.” Indeed, some of these “Makedonisti,” as the Bulgarian press called them, went much further. They claimed to be the “purest Slavs” and “descendants of the ancient Macedonians” of Philip and Alexander. They were in effect asking: “We broke away from the Greeks, should we now fall under others?”¹⁴

Although we know little about the Makedonisti, available evidence suggests reasonable, extensive, coordinated activity. By the late 1860s, they had apparently become a significant movement that alarmed the Bulgarians. The most reliable and enlightening information about them comes from the outstanding Bulgarian awakener, publicist, and poet Petko R. Slaveikov. He helped direct the Bulgarian drive in Macedonia and grasped the situation there. In "The Macedonian Question," an article for *Makedoniia* (Constantinople) early in 1871, he revealed the existence of the Macedonian movement and question. He explained that the problem was not new, that it had been around for well over a decade, and that the Bulgarians had not taken it seriously; as late as 1870, he himself had tended to underestimate the force of the ideas of the Makedonisti. However, more recent contacts with Macedonians "showed to us that we are dealing not merely with empty words, but rather with an idea that many wish to turn into life."¹⁵

Three years later, the exarch sent Slaveikov to Macedonia to inquire about growing sentiment against his church. In February 1874, Slaveikov reported from Salonika that the Macedonians believed that answers to the Macedonian question favored only the Bulgarians; they insisted that they were not Bulgarian, wanted their own, separate church, and resisted the "east" Bulgarian language in their literature. He stressed the trend of thought that sought elevation of Macedonian to a literary language and creation of a Macedonian hierarchy through reestablishment of the Ohrid archbishopric. He concluded: "If steps are not taken from a place of authority, there is danger that this [tendency] would grow into common thinking. Then the consequences will be much more serious."

Two days later, in another letter from Salonika, Slaveikov told the exarch: "Even in the language of communication of the Macedonian activists there is talk of a 'Macedonian movement,' which should be understood as independent national and religious emancipation . . . the separatism is spreading from a religious to wider national foundation."¹⁶

The clash between Bulgarianism and Macedonianism, which began about mid-century, involved crucial questions for any people: language, historical and religious traditions, ethnicity, national identity, local patriotism, and so on. It produced a clear distinction between the interests of the well-established Bulgarian national movement and the Macedonians. More important, it aided the national awakening of the Macedo-

nians and the shaping of their separate national identity. In the long run, it gave rise to two distinct national conceptions—Bulgarian and Macedonian—for the future of Slavs still under Ottoman rule.

Paths to Nationhood (1870–1913)

In this section, we look at the Macedonians' reactions to the nationalist claims of the neighboring Balkan states, which we examine first. Their responses coalesced into three national trends, which also represented paths to Macedonian nationhood: the masses' Macedonianism, or *naši-zam* (nativism), and the intelligentsia's two competing trends, Macedono-Bulgarianism and Macedonianism. In setting the context for the last two trends, we look also at the "philisms" of a number of intellectuals vis-à-vis Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia.

The establishment of a Bulgarian national church, the exarchate, in 1870 represented a turning point for both the Bulgarians and the Macedonians. For the former, it was the most notable triumph of their national movement until then; for the latter, the greatest stumbling block and challenge to the continued development of their national consciousness and identity. The Ottoman government set it up as an Ottoman institution—in effect a (Slav) Orthodox millet, in addition to the (Greek) Orthodox one under the Patriarchist church. As a legal institution, the exarchate received all the rights and privileges that the patriarchate enjoyed: to establish, direct, and control the cultural, the social, and, to a lesser extent, the economic and political life of those communities or regions that it was able to win over to its jurisdiction.

As the Ottoman empire's only legal and free Slav church, the exarchate became influential among the empire's Slav masses and soon was leading the anti-Patriarchist, or anti-Greek movement in its remaining Slavic-populated areas, in Bulgaria and Macedonia. The exarchate participated in this struggle, along with its other activities, not in the name of Slavdom, but rather for the Bulgarian national cause.

From its inception, the exarchate became the guiding force behind Bulgarian nationalism and the most effective instrument for spreading the Bulgarian national idea, especially in Macedonia. In the theocratic Ottoman state, the central administration took virtually no interest in non-Muslim cultural and social life, leaving the field wide open for the

exarchate. With the state's consent, it gradually became influential among the Macedonians. After 1878, the new principality of Bulgaria placed its power and resources at the disposal of the national church in its struggle with the Patriarchists.¹⁷

Growing Bulgarian influence in Macedonia provoked challenges. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Patriarchist church was determined to preserve its traditional dominance. After 1870, it worked even harder, and supportive Greece matched every Bulgarian move. Furthermore, Serbia, whose interest in Macedonia had long been rather cursory, entered the fray in serious fashion after 1878, and particularly following its crushing military defeat by Bulgaria in 1885.

Thus by the 1880s a vicious three-way struggle for Macedonia was under way. As we saw above, the antagonists sought control of Macedonia's cultural and spiritual life through domination of schools, churches, the press, and communal organizations. They fought first with propaganda, political pressure, and enormous financial expenditures. Over time, however, and especially after Macedonia's Ilinden Uprising of 1903, they resorted to armed force. All three antagonists sought to terrorize the others and their followers and to win over the Macedonian population, or rather terrorize it into submission. They aimed variously to annex the entire territory (Bulgaria's plan) or to partition it (Greece and Serbia's later hope).

The Ottoman administration tolerated and tacitly encouraged the competition, in total accord with the basic principle of its statecraft: divide and rule in order to survive. In such circumstances, Macedonian national consciousness could hardly continue to awaken and grow. With strong pressure from every side—state authority and the other Balkan nationalisms—the young and weak Macedonian movement could barely function and lacked material means and institutional foundations. Even the new but impoverished middle class was vulnerable to the foreign propaganda. As well, the opposition was overwhelmingly strong. Consequently, Macedonian movements could operate only illegally and underground and, until the revolutionary organization emerged in the 1890s, in isolation from its population.

In this post-1870 situation, the ethnically homogeneous, Orthodox Slavic Macedonians experienced an artificial division into three "faiths," attending variously a Bulgarian (Exarchist), Greek (Patriarchist), or Serbian church. And such church affiliation split them into Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian "nations," or rather "parties." This situation, of

course, did not necessarily represent assimilation, the acquisition of a particular national consciousness. It only reflected Macedonia's peculiar political reality.

Most Macedonians attended religious services in a language they did not understand; as well, in the 1880s most were illiterate or semi-literate, and into the interwar years many Macedonians would remain so. The vast majority of students at foreign (propaganda) schools received only one to three years of elementary schooling—insufficient even to grasp Bulgarian and Serbian, let alone Greek. Macedonian dialects remained the language of home and everyday life for Macedonians, who continued to identify with them and with the rich folklore and the traditional ways of Macedonia.

Populist Macedonianism, or *našizam*, was to become a powerful force among the Macedonians. If the masses of the population had any political awareness, it was certainly *not* a developed Bulgarian, Greek, or Serbian national consciousness, as we can see from reports by Balkan diplomatic and religious representatives in the Ottoman empire, as well as by foreign officials in Macedonia.¹⁸ Their protonational consciousness was largely a response to such factors as language, folklore, customs, traditions, and local interests—symbols that they now identified with Macedonia and which differentiated them from their neighbors and others.

In August–September 1907, M. Petraiev, a Russian consular official and keen Balkan observer, accompanied Hilmi Pasha, inspector general for Macedonia, and an Austro-Hungarian representative on a tour of Macedonia. Afterward, he reported to his Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “In the Kastoria kaza, delegations from the villages came to see us and declared that they wanted neither Greek nor Bulgarian teachers and priests; rather, they insisted that they be Macedonians. When questioned about their nationality, they replied that they are Macedonians. These declarations, which are far from being isolated, demonstrate that the Christian population of Macedonia is fed-up with the oppression of the various propagandas, and that in them is beginning to awaken a national consciousness different from those being imposed on them from the outside.”¹⁹

Macedonians' sense of belonging, of togetherness, colored their perceptions of themselves and others, and they normally expressed it with the dichotomy *nie-tie* (we–they), *naš-vaš* (ours–yours), or *naš-čuž* (our–foreign, strange). Already in the first two decades of the 1800s, Kiril

Pejčinović, one of the first writers of Macedonian vernacular, referred to his people as *našinski* (our).²⁰ And *naš* is by far the most common self-ascription in the brothers Miladinov's famous 1861 collection of folk songs.²¹ This prevalent attitude—a peasant conception, or ideology, of *našizam*—prevented entrenchment of foreign national ideas. This form of incipient, or latent national consciousness survived in the three parts of divided Macedonia well into the 1930s and is still common among Aegean Macedonians and their compatriots in Canada, the United States, and Australia.

Našizam was evident to Captain P. H. Evans, a British officer with the Special Operations Executive (SOE) who was dropped in western Aegean Macedonia in September 1943 and spent almost a year there as a British liaison officer (BLO) and station commander. He dwelled and moved freely among the Macedonians, “who accepted and trusted him.” He described them as “temperamental and distrustful creatures.” Living under so many masters, they had developed “a perfect duplicity” of character, and “this makes them difficult to know. . . . It is hard to find out what they are thinking.” “The ordinary Macedonian villager,” Evans continues, “is curiously neutral, he adopts a protective coloring and, like the chameleon, can change it when necessary.” However, he emphasizes:

It is also important to emphasize that the inhabitants, just as they are not *Greeks*, are also not *Bulgarians* or *Serbs* or *Croats*. They are *Macedonians*. . . . The Greeks always call them *Bulgars* and damn them accordingly. . . . If they were *Bulgars*, how is it that while they are spread over part of four countries, one of which is *Bulgaria*, they consider themselves a single entity and for the most part describe themselves as *Macedonians*? . . .

The *Macedonians* are actuated by strong but mixed feelings of patriotism . . . , a thriving and at times fervent local patriotism; and a feeling hard to assess because rarely uttered before a stranger . . . for *Macedonia* as such, regardless of present frontier-lines, which are looked upon as usurpation. . . .

The same tenacity comes out in *Macedonian* songs, the traditional ones as well as those which have been made expressly in the present war. It is true that the songs usually mention *Macedonia* and not one particular place in *Macedonia*, but the feeling, which runs through them, is a simple and direct love of country, not an intellectual enthusiasm for a political idea. . . . Passing through them all is the *Macedonian's* love of the place he lives in. . . .

Macedonian patriotism is not artificial; it is natural, a spontaneous

and deep-rooted feeling which begins in childhood, like everyone else's patriotism.²²

Radically different conditions after 1870, however, affected the small intelligentsia, some of whose members had profound attachments—"philisms"—toward Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia, which feelings began to wane in the face of Macedono-Bulgarianism and Macedonianism, which we consider below.

Those youths whose families had private means or benefited from the great generosity of the propaganda spreaders could continue studies in Athens, Belgrade, Sofia, or the famous Exarchist gymnasium in Salonika. There young Macedonians mastered the host state's language and became familiar with its national ideology and culture. Some embraced the new teaching, for all practical purposes assimilating themselves into what seemed a superior culture and moving toward "philism." The others rejected this road partially or totally and assumed leadership in both the Macedonian national and revolutionary movements.

Cleavages within the Macedonian intelligentsia had been discernible and found expression in pre-1870 debates. After 1870, or rather in the last quarter of the century, however, they intensified and coalesced into three major orientations: philisms (Bulgarian, Greek, and Serbian), Macedono-Bulgarianism, and Macedonianism. These survived in modified forms and in varying strength well into the twentieth century.

The actively philist section of the intelligentsia had few adherents but tended to represent more affluent elements in the small middle class. Though initially strongest, Grecophilism continued its downward slide; Serbophilism, while it attracted a following, never spread widely. Both Grecophiles and Serbophiles tended to total assimilation and absorption by the two respective nations. Except for the minority among them whose lingering patriotism led them to seek Macedonian territorial autonomy or independence as the only practical resolution of the Macedonian question, they did not help develop Macedonian national consciousness.

Bulgarophilism, in contrast, was increasing not so much in Macedonia as among Macedonians in Bulgaria proper. Many Macedonians sought refuge there from Ottoman oppression, and their numbers grew greatly after the unsuccessful uprisings of 1878 and 1903 and after the two Balkan Wars and the First World War. The Bulgarophiles experienced cultural assimilation and considered themselves Bulgarian. But

unlike Grecophiles and Serbophiles, or at least far more than those two groups, they maintained their Macedonian connection, continued to identify with Macedonia, and called themselves “Macedonian Bulgarians” (Makedonski bŭlgari). They accepted the Bulgarian national cause wholeheartedly and dreamt of a Great Bulgaria in which Macedonia was to take a central place.

They welcomed the exarchate as the first and most significant victory and, after creation of the Bulgarian principality in 1878, advocated annexation of Macedonia as one people in a common territorial state. The Bulgarophiles were behind the founding in 1895, in Sofia, of the Supreme Macedonian-Adrianople Committee (Vŭrkhoven Makedonsko-odrinski komitet)—a rival to the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (Vnatrešna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija, or VMRO) of 1893—to carry on the struggle.

By 1901, the government and court in Sofia, which continued to seek a Great (San Stefano) Bulgaria, brought it under their control, and the *vrhovisti* and their ideology, *vrhovism*, identified themselves totally with the interests of the Bulgarian state in Macedonia.

Bulgarophilism, like Greco- and Serbophilism, did not further Macedonian national consciousness and in fact strongly harmed its evolution. By using the Macedonian name and through its influence among the Macedonian émigrés in Bulgaria and its connections with the Bulgarian establishment, it sought and often was able to manipulate and divert authentic expressions of Macedonian patriotism and nationalism in the interests of Bulgarian expansionism.²³

In contrast to the philisms of some intellectuals, the two major national trends within the intelligentsia—Macedono-Bulgarianism and Macedonianism—constituted a fateful duality as parallel and somewhat separate developments of Macedonian national consciousness. The former represented a political and territorial sensibility, and the latter, ethnic and cultural as well.

Macedono-Bulgarianism initially attempted a compromise between Macedonianism and Bulgarianism, as its members of the intelligentsia sought to reconcile lack of a Slav-Macedonian state and church with the existence of distinct Macedonian cultural traits and political and socioeconomic interests.

The group’s study of the past, though incomplete, uncovered a medieval Slav state in Macedonia—Tsar Samuil’s “Macedonian king-

dom,” which carried the Bulgarian name—and a church, the Ohrid archbishopric, which identified with it. The group’s adherents took the name “Macedono-Bulgarians,” but they felt themselves different from the “upper Bulgarians” (*gorni Būgari*), the ‘Šopi’ of the earlier period. Their debates with the Bulgarians centered on language. They rejected the Bulgarian literary language, which derived from the most easterly Bulgarian dialects; they insisted on use of Macedonian (*narečje*) in elementary schooling, and schoolbooks in that language came from Parteniija Zografski, Kuzman Šapkarev, Venijamin Mačukovski, Dimitar Makedonski, Dimitar Uzunov, and particularly Ćorĝija Pulevski.

Furthermore, they sought a common, compromise literary language, which would not only factor in Macedonian but would come from it, since, they argued, it was the direct successor of the old language of SS Cyril and Methodius. Zografski, Šapkarev, and Mačukovski even worked on “Bulgarian grammars of the Macedonian speech,” which attempts jolted the Bulgarian establishment.²⁴

Their efforts, however, went nowhere. The victorious and confident Bulgarian national movement was in no mood for compromise. More important, the three-way struggle for Macedonia and the land’s relative weakness forced the Macedono-Bulgarians to adjust to current conditions. Soon after 1870, they abandoned the demand for an autonomous church and thus accepted the new exarchate’s jurisdiction, and they also acquiesced to use of Bulgarian in schools.

Over time, however, they intensified their defense of the political interests of Macedonia and its people. They denounced all foreign interference, propagated full political separation of the Macedonians from the Bulgarians, and began a long struggle for an autonomous or independent Macedonia.

Although they expected sympathy and support from the Bulgarians, the latter consistently condemned the movement as “political separatism.” In fact it was much more: it represented authentic Macedonian patriotism, indeed, political nationalism. Macedono-Bulgarianism manifested itself in at least three ways between 1870 and 1890: in a widespread movement (early 1870s) for an autonomous Macedonian church through reestablishment of the Ohrid archbishopric or creation of a Uniate or a Protestant church for Macedonia; in uprisings at Razlog (1876) and Kresna (1878); and in a spontaneous mass social-political movement (late 1880s) against the Exarchist church and its growing interference in Macedonian life, especially in towns and cities.

In the 1890s, these stirrings of discontent and expressions of Macedonian consciousness coalesced into a powerful movement under the new Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (Vnatrešna Makedonska Revolucionerna Organizacija, or VMRO). The VMRO, which Misirkov believes represented “a landmark in our [Macedonian] history,”²⁵ raised the slogan “Macedonia for the Macedonians” and provided leadership and organization in the struggle for liberation of Macedonia from Ottoman rule.

Even though many of its leaders were Macedono-Bulgarians, its proclamations, statutes, and programs addressed all Slav Macedonians, regardless of church or “party,” as well as non-Slav minorities, Turks, Vlachs, Greeks, and Jews. Its ultimate aims were autonomy, independence, and eventually a place in a Slav or a wider Balkan federation. From the outset, it prized its own freedom of action. While welcoming aid, it rejected all outside interference; it stressed repeatedly that the struggle was the task exclusively of Macedonians, who alone should liberate their homeland.

From its launch, the VMRO and the national movement as a whole focused on political liberation. The VMRO downplayed questions about the ethnic identity of the (Slav) Macedonians, which seemed potentially explosive and divisive at a time when unity was essential. The movement often appeared to outsiders to be leaning to or even being under the sway of Bulgaria; most of its leaders had studied in Bulgaria or in Exarchist schools, and the Exarchist side tolerated and sometimes aided their activities. However, the VMRO condemned the interference of all the neighboring states and blamed them for the artificial divisions among the (Slav) Macedonians.

There was not total internal unity on this issue; there were differences even among the VMRO leaders. The body’s right wing had many adherents among Macedonians living in Bulgaria and was openly Bulgarianophilic in its cultural and national orientation. The left wing, which included the most outstanding leaders (Delčev, Gruev, Sandanski, Petrov, Hadžidimov, Poparsov, and Tošev), operated in Macedonia, was in closer touch with the *našizam* of the masses, leaned toward socialism, and usually played down or ignored the ethnic question. Thus political, ideological, tactical, and practical considerations encouraged these leaders to postpone consideration of this issue for Macedonians to resolve on their own after liberation.²⁶

As long as the left wing directed and controlled the VMRO, until

after the Ilinden Uprising of 1903, the organization emphasized the Macedonian people (*narod*), patriotism, political consciousness, and total equality of all ethnic groups and religions in Macedonia. After Ilinden, the right wing took over the organization, along with Bulgrophiles and *vrhovisti* (Supremists), and its orientation changed substantially.

Macedonianism (Makedonizam), the second major post-1870 trend (along with Macedono-Bulgarianism), represented a clear and authentic expression of national consciousness and identity. Its roots appear in that section of the Macedonian intelligentsia of the 1860s that took the name of the land as a national name and proclaimed the Macedonians direct descendants of the ancient eponymous people and a distinct and separate Slav nation. Most of its advocates hailed from the lower classes, village and petty-bourgeois intellectuals and craftspeople.

The “Makedonisti” differed from the “philes” and the right-wing Macedono-Bulgarians in their early education. The “philes” had studied in the schools of only one propaganda or in one of the respective Balkan states; the Macedono-Bulgarians, almost exclusively in Exarchist schools or in Bulgaria. Many leading figures of Macedonianism, like some left-wingers in the VMRO, had attended schools of two or all three of the proselytizers, and a few, just Serbian schools in Macedonia or in Belgrade.

It appears that such varied exposure strengthened their conviction, which they derived from *našizam*, that Macedonians were not Bulgarian, Serbian, or Greek and that Macedonian constituted a separate Slav language somewhere between Bulgarian and Serbian. They therefore denounced all three forms of propaganda operating in Macedonia and their efforts to divide Slavic Macedonians. As a result they ended up facing pursuit and persecution by all three and having to work mostly in secret, with no aid and no institutional base or organizational network in Macedonia.

Consequently, Macedonianism, which seemed promising in the 1860s, could evolve after 1870, but only in a rather haphazard and unsystematic fashion. It found expression in the works of individuals such as Ć. Pulevski, a self-taught philologist, poet, and historian, or in the activities of the Exarchist metropolitan of Skopje, Teodosija Gologonov, who split with the exarchate in the hope of reestablishing the Ohrid archbishopric as a Macedonian church and of founding Macedonian

schools. Spontaneous mass outbreaks occurred, mainly against the exarchate, demanding a Macedonian church and use of Macedonian in schools; many people tried to prepare Macedonian grammars, dictionaries, and schoolbooks and to secure publication of newspapers in the language.

In the late 1880s, the breeding ground for Macedonianism was numerous secret and legal circles and societies. Some emerged in Macedonia, but most of them abroad, in Belgrade, Sofia, and Russia, some with their own, short-lived publications. More than twenty existed before the Balkan Wars—most notably, the Young Macedonian Literary Group (Sofia, 1892), with its journal, *Loza* (Grapevine); the Vardar Student Society (Belgrade, 1893); the Macedonian Club, with its reading room and *Balkanski glasnik* (Balkan Herald) (Belgrade, 1902); and the Macedonian Scientific-Literary Society (Makedonsko naučno-literaturno drugarstvo) (St. Petersburg, 1902), which served until 1917 as a Macedonian *matica*. Through its many activities and publications, including the monthly *Makedonskii glas* (*Makedonski glas*) (Macedonian Voice) in 1913 and 1914, the St. Petersburg society presented a Macedonian point of view and the interests of Macedonia and the Macedonians.

Memberships in these organizations, which included also major left-wing leaders of the VMRO, frequently overlapped. Circumstances forced many individuals to keep moving until many found safe haven in the Russian capital. These bodies contributed some of the best-known ideologues and activists of Macedonianism, such as K. P. Misirkov, D. Čupovski, N. Dimov, Dr. G. Konstantinović, Stefan Dedov, and D. T. Mišajkov. And in that context, a clear national program crystallized, which the Bulgarians dubbed “national separatism.” Its principal points received public expression in 1902 in the newspaper *Balkanski glasnik* and on 12 November of that year in a lengthy memorandum from the Macedonian Scientific-Literary Society to the council of the St. Petersburg Slavic Benevolent Society and to the Russian government. However, Krste P. Misirkov’s Macedonian-language *Za makedonckite raboti*, which he wrote during the Ilinden Uprising and published in Sofia in December 1903, gave its fullest elaboration.²⁷

The principal aims of Macedonianism were recognition of the Macedonians as a distinct Slav nation; acceptance of Macedonian as a literary language and its introduction in schools and administration; reestablishment of the Ohrid archbishopric as a Macedonian autoceph-

lous church and termination of all foreign propaganda; and autonomy within the Ottoman empire, which would guarantee unity and normal national development of the people.

Thus, unlike the VMRO, the “political separatists,” Makedonisti, or “national separatists,” sought above all free and unhindered national cultural development through expulsion of foreign propaganda organizations. For this reason, they opposed a revolutionary struggle against the Ottoman empire, which they viewed as a potential ally in the confrontation with Bulgaria, Greece, and Serbia. Only evolution and cooperation with the Ottoman empire, and perhaps help from some great powers, could free Macedonia from the pretenders and prepare its people for an independent national and political life.²⁸

Such parallel and somewhat separate development of Macedono-Bulgarianism and Macedonianism as expressions of Macedonian consciousness and identity weakened the movement for national liberation. In the final analysis, however, the divisions appeared as an unavoidable consequence of the hazy historical tradition; they resulted above all from the complex contemporary reality of Macedonia and the Macedonians.

The three major strands—the intelligentsia’s Macedono-Bulgarianism and Macedonianism and popular Macedonianism (*našizam*)—would come together only in the 1930s, under entirely different circumstances.