

**NATIONALISM IN PRACTICE: ASSIMILATION, EXPULSION, AND
EXTERMINATION IN THE BALKANS, 1913-1945**

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
San Diego State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
History

by
Josef M. Djordjevski
Summer 2012

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

The Undersigned Faculty Committee Approves the

Thesis of Josef M. Djordjevski:

Nationalism in Practice: Assimilation, Expulsion, and Extermination in the

Balkans, 1913-1945

Edward Beasley

Edward Beasley, Chair
Department of History

Lawrence Baron

Lawrence Baron
Department of History

Mary Wauchope

Mary Wauchope
Department of European Studies

July 18, 2012

Approval Date

Copyright © 2012

by

Josef M. Djordjevski

All Rights Reserved

DEDICATION

For Baba and Dedo, who lived through many of the events described in here.

The right to be *no one* is guaranteed me by the constitution of this country. Citizens are not obliged to declare their nationality if they don't want to, I say. In real life it's different, they say, everybody is obliged to be *someone*. That's just why we have wars, I say, because everyone agreed to belong to their own blood group. That's why we have wars, they say, because people like you wanted us all to be *no one*.

--Dubravka Ugresic, *Nice People Don't Mention Such Things*

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Nationalism in Practice: Assimilation, Expulsion, and
Extermination in the Balkans, 1913-1945

by

Josef M. Djordjevski

Master of Arts in History

San Diego State University, 2012

This work examines how force has been used in the process of nation-building in the Balkans from the Balkan Wars to the end of World War II, particularly among the Slavs of Macedonia and the Serbs of Croatia. By looking at the development of nationalism from its conception in the 18th and 19th centuries to its “apogee” in the first half of the 20th century, this thesis also explores Balkan events and ideas of nationality and nationhood in the region while putting them into a broader European context.

Apart from exploring nation-building and the development of nationalism, this work shows how populations claimed by nationalists develop forms of identity that do not reflect or conform to those claims. By tracing these developments it will become clear that nationalist claims over certain populations based on criteria such as language, race and culture naturally lead to forced inclusion into, or exclusion from, national bodies and states.

In order to effectively demonstrate the main points of this thesis, several primary documents have been employed throughout the work. These include reports from western observers visiting the Balkans, intellectual writings, and Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian and Bulgarian newspapers, letters, and other documents.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT.....	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	viii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION	9
3 SERBIANIZATION	27
4 BULGARIZATION PT.1 – PIRIN MACEDONIA	39
5 BULGARIZATION PT.2 – VARDAR MACEDONIA.....	50
6 FRATRICIDE – ASSIMILATION AND EXTERMINATION IN THE NDH	67
7 CONCLUSION.....	80
REFERENCES	85

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Beasley, Dr. Baron and Dr. Wauchope for their support and interest in my topic and for all their guidance throughout my experience as a graduate student. I would also like to thank my family for all their unconditional love and encouragement that has helped me stay focused and positive in accomplishing my goals. I would like to dedicate a special thanks to my father, Radko Djordjevski, for all his help in translating documents from Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian and Bulgarian to English, and for all his feedback and enthusiasm.

For my wonderful experience as a student conducting research in the Republic of Macedonia, I would like to especially thank Sonja Strezovska-Veljanovska at St. Kliment Ohridski Library for all her help and for going out of her way to make sure I got what I needed, and for introducing me to other Macedonian historians. I would also like to thank Dr. Divna Lakinska for her feedback and constructive criticism, and for the piles, and piles of books she gave me, especially *Za Makedonskite Raboti* by Krste Misirkov.

Finally, I would like to thank all of my friends and fellow graduate students at SDSU who are far too numerous to mention here by name. Thank you all for your support and interest in my work.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2011, while conducting research in the Balkans, I saw messages written on walls that, although they were in two completely different countries, held similar meanings. In Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, I visited an enormous and dilapidated, communist-era building that served as a dormitory for students. In the hallway there was a small piece of graffiti on the wall that stuck out next to hundreds of other unreadable scribbles. It simply read “There are no Macedonians.” Then, a few weeks later I was on the opposite side of the Balkan Peninsula, in the small Adriatic town of Budva in Montenegro, which declared its independence from union with Serbia in 2006. On a wall near a bus stop, in plain sight of tourists coming in and out of the city, a spray painted message read: “Montenegrins are Serbs.” This attempt to deny others’ claims to nationhood extended far beyond these two countries. Just to the south, in Albania, Greek-speakers and members of the Greek Orthodox Church are considered by many Albanian historians to be originated from Illyrians and not Greeks, and are therefore Albanian in origin. In Greece, people who feel that they are either Bulgarians or Macedonian Slavs are referred to as “Slavophone” Greeks. Even in Macedonia, whose national self-identification, like that of the Montenegrins, has been challenged by neighboring countries, the government was alleging that hundreds of thousands of Macedonians live in the areas of Pirin Macedonia in Bulgaria and Aegean Macedonia in Greece, though many of those “Macedonians” consider themselves to be Bulgarians or Greeks respectively.

All of these instances combined tell me that Patrick J. Geary is correct in his statement that “Europe’s peoples have always been far more fluid, complex, and dynamic than the imaginings of modern nationalists.”¹ As the above examples show, the denial of national sentiment is a Europe-wide problem, especially since Greece and Bulgaria are

¹ Patrick J. Geary, *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 13.

members of the European Union, while others are on their way to joining. The reasons behind this problem can be seen in Loring Danforth's explanation of the goal of modern nationalism: "the assimilation and homogenization of the population of the new state so that all its citizens are also by definition members of the nation that the state embodies."² The nations that states claim to represent or embody are seen by the nationalists who build and support them as being comprised of homogenous groups who share similar traits. The problem with this notion is that none of the criteria for nationhood implies self-identification or individual and group sentiment. Therefore, the nations that were created and developed in the 19th and 20th centuries had to be forced onto populations that did not feel they were a part of that nation. As Benedict Anderson argues, nations are "imagined communities". But many of Europe's "imagined communities" are not imagined in the same way by all the people they claim to encompass. Speaking about Europe after the Paris Peace Conference, which was based solely on "the principle of nationality", E.J. Hobsbawm writes that "the logical implication of trying to create a continent neatly divided into coherent territorial states each inhabited by a separate ethnically and linguistically homogenous population, was the mass expulsion or extermination of minorities."³ While he is correct in this statement, I would add that another outcome of such a process is forced assimilation.

Most scholars today would agree that nations, as well as nation-states, are socially constructed, and that they are a 19th and early 20th century phenomenon. As the Italian statesman Massimo d'Azeglio put it, upon the unification of Italy, "we have made Italy. Now we have to make Italians."⁴ While this statement reinforces Hobsbawm's claim that "nationalism comes before nations", it also exposes how weak the foundations of nationalism truly are, especially since at the time of Italian unification only around 2 ½ percent of the population spoke proper Italian.⁵ But what is nationalism? What exactly is a nation? Nationalism, as defined by Ernst Gellner, is the idea that "the political and national unit

² Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 17.

³ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 133.

⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

should be congruent."⁶ For the definition of “a nation”, Loring Danforth’s simple yet effective definition that nations are “politicized ethnic groups” will suffice. Many students of nationalism are likely to take contention with such simple definitions, but for a long time now scholars have struggled to define nations, nationality and nationalism. Although definitions can be useful for our understanding of how to describe what has dominated international politics for the last two centuries, it is much more important, for our purposes, to focus on what nations and nationality meant to those who created, developed and re-created them. While Hobsbawm is correct in his assertion that all “objective definitions” of nationhood have thus far failed, it seems to me that many of the nationalists, as well as many of the nationals, who are responsible for the creation of modern nations and nation-states, knew or at least pretended to know, exactly what a nation was.

Though there were almost always arguments for or against the existence of nations, such arguments had to be made within a single framework. The “principle of nationality”, which was a product of the 19th century, proposed that a nation could only be a nation based on its “historical association” with a state, a well-established cultural elite possessing its own literary language, and “a proven capacity for conquest.”⁷ Then in the latter half of the 19th century the criteria were expanded. According to Danforth, nations were formed based on “preexisting cultural forms”. These “cultural forms” included “conceptions of shared blood, race, language, place of origin, and religion” to which I would add historical experience and culture.⁸ These “cultural forms” and the “principle of nationality”, as we shall see, are what nationalists used to define nations.

Employing Miroslav Hroch’s idea that nationalism can historically be divided into three different phases, Hobsbawm suggests that we can trace how nationalism developed in the 19th and 20th centuries from the beginnings of “proto-nationalism” to the “apogee” of nationalism. Phase A, occurring in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, was an almost entirely cultural form of nationalism. Many scholars refer to this period as the age of “romantic nationalism”. In this phase certain intellectuals “revived” the vernaculars of their

⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁸ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 15.

national languages by recreating them in literary form. Mostly, these “revivals” came from cultural backlashes due to intrusion by other cultures seen as foreign. As Danforth states, “a nation is defined through a process of exclusion; a self is defined in opposition to another.”⁹ This can be seen by the Orthodox clergyman Paisius of Hilendar’s call to reject Hellenism and the intrusion of the Greek language among Bulgarian speakers in 1762. Similarly in 1808, while Berlin was under French occupation, Johan Gottlieb Fichte claimed in his *Addresses to the German Nation* that “it is only by means of the common characteristic of being German that we can avert the downfall of our nation which is threatened by its fusion with foreign peoples.”¹⁰ In this phase, however, nationalists called mainly for cultural recognition and not political self-determination. It was during Phase B, ca. 1870 - 1918, that a significant number of militant “patriots” began to call for congruency between the national and political bodies. Then in Phase C, which lasted roughly between 1918 and 1950, “nationalist programmes acquire mass support, or at least some of the mass support that nationalists always claim they represent.”¹¹ Although these three phases do seem to accurately represent the development of nationalism in Europe, I would add that Phase C, though occurring before 1918 unlike Hobsbawm suggests, is also the phase in which mass forced assimilations into “the nation” began occurring. Furthermore, it was the development of ideas in Phases A and B that allowed forced assimilation to occur in the first place.

The early phase of romantic nationalism saw new ideas, mostly rooted in language and folklore, of what constituted a nation. This was the case even though the first nation-states, such as England and France, remained culturally heterogeneous. According to Hobsbawm “there was no logical connection between the body of citizens of a territorial state on one hand, and the identification of a ‘nation’ on ethnic, linguistic or other grounds.”¹² At least in theory, the major factor of membership into the nation was citizenship. In practice, however, language and racial or ethnic origin remained important factors. According to Ivo Banac, the nationalism of the late 19th century, which was more ethnically exclusive in

⁹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1922), 4.

¹¹ Hobsbawm, *Nations*, 12.

¹² Ibid., 19.

nature, was rooted in what he calls “Jacobin planned ethnocide”, since during the French Revolution it was believed only “counterrevolutionaries” spoke minority languages like Breton and Basque while true patriots spoke only French.¹³ Therefore, while nation-states were heterogeneous in nature and inclusive in theory, the foundations for the ethnically exclusive nations of the latter half of the century had already been laid.

During Hroch’s Phase B, two aspects of the earlier definition of nation-states were abandoned. One of these was the so-called “threshold principle”, which was rooted in the belief that only nations of sufficient size with already well-developed cultures and economies could call themselves nations. Now, “non-state” national movements were becoming more and more militant and numerous, and “*any* body of people considering themselves a ‘nation’ claimed the right to self-determination.”¹⁴ Aside from this, and much more importantly, the cultural and linguistic ideas of romantic nationalism, now blended with the concept of race, became the dominant factors justifying political nationhood. This can be seen as beginning with the unifications of Italy and Germany, since neither of the two had any historical association with a single, unified state, language and its perceived relationship with origin and race were the only unifying factors they could claim.¹⁵ Throughout all three of Hroch’s Phases one can see nationalist rhetoric in which the words “blood” and “language” are used as complimentary adjectives for nationality.

Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza and Francesco Cavalli-Sforza give us a modern definition of race, or at least how it is used: “A group of people united by common origins, who to some extent are similar genetically, in terms of inherited biological features.”¹⁶ 19th century nationalists took this concept and applied it to national origins with language as an appendage. With this view of the relationship between language, race and nation, people could now be viewed as being born with national identities. Nations, which we have seen are social constructs, created from the complicated circumstances of the last two centuries, could

¹³ Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 28.

¹⁴ Hobsbawm, *Nations*, 102.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁶ Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza and Francesco Cavalli-Sforza, *The Great Human Diasporas: The History of Diversity and Evolution* (Milan: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 237.

now be seen as fixed and inherent. How a person viewed him or herself meant little in the face of such claims. Therefore, d’Aziglio could be interpreted as saying “we have Italians. Now we have to make them know it.” With Hroch’s Phases A and B combined, it would be completely normal in the eyes of a modern nationalist for a person who was born to Serbian-speaking parents and spoke Serbian to be considered Serbian by blood; a fact which cannot be changed, even if, for example, the person self-identified as a Montenegrin. Loring Danforth illustrates the outcome of such claims very well:

As the state creates the nation and welds by force if necessary a heterogeneous population into a unified body politic, some people, whose culture does not conform to the new national culture, will inevitably be left at the margins of the nation-state. At one level these people will be rejected and excluded, while at another they will be simultaneously assimilated and incorporated.¹⁷

This effectively shows the two sides of nationalism. One, it can be completely exclusive, leaving no room for groups that do not reflect the national ideal. On the other hand, it can be inclusive, claiming all those who fit into the “imagined community” of the nation-state. The problem is however, even those who, in nationalist standards, fit into the categories, may not share the same sentiments.

In *Peasants into Frenchmen* (1976) Eugen Weber does a beautiful job showing how, due to modernity, “the end of the [19th century] saw the wholesale destruction of traditional ways” in the French countryside.¹⁸ He compares the assimilation of the French peasants, and the replacement of their traditional ways of self-identification with the idea of French nationality, to colonialism. While there are some interesting comparisons made between the forced assimilation of the French peasants and the assimilation of France’s colonial subjects, one enormous difference lingers. Even though some of the reports on the French peasants by urban Frenchmen can be considered racist, the French peasants, even the ones who spoke Breton or Basque, were included in the claim by the Third Republic that France was comprised of “one people, one country, one government, one nation, one fatherland.”¹⁹ Since the peasants in the countryside often felt that the French state was foreign to them, this shows

¹⁷ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 20.

¹⁸ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 471.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 95.

that forced national assimilation is a natural outcome of nationalist claims on populations that, while they may be legitimate according to the principle of nationality, do not reflect the reality of the populations the claims are based on.

While the forceful outcome of nationalism can be seen across Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, this work will be focusing on a lesser known area of the Continent; the Balkans. The Balkans are famous for being the “powder keg” of Europe that eventually led to the outbreak of World War I. Also, certain groups of people from the area are seen as being some of Europe’s most nationalistic. The main significance in choosing the Balkans to show how forced assimilation has been a natural outcome of nationalism in Europe is that in the Balkans, such forced assimilations, more so than in other areas of Europe, have been completely unsuccessful. In almost every country in the Balkans, from Greece to Romania, there are nationalist groups whose goal is national self-determination and autonomy from the nation-states they find themselves in. While any nation-state in the Balkans during the late 19th and early 20th centuries would serve as a sufficient case study, Macedonia provides the best example; since on three different occasions between 1913 and 1945 the Macedonian Slavs were subjected to forced assimilation by surrounding states. Therefore, this work will focus mainly on the forced assimilation of the Macedonian Slavs by two of Macedonia’s neighbors, and contenders, Bulgaria and Serbia. While similar forced assimilations occurred in the Greek part of Aegean Macedonia as well, attention will be mostly dedicated to the Bulgarians and Serbs since, both being mainly Slavic countries, their claims on the rightful ownership of the Macedonian Slavs were seen in the eyes of modern nationalists to be much more legitimate. While Greek claims on the Macedonian Slavs were mainly based on religion, the Serbs and Bulgarians based theirs on historical experience, culture, language and racial similarity.

Aside from exposing certain nationalist myths rooted in the 19th century that were employed by the Bulgarians and Serbs in their conquests of Macedonia, focusing on the Macedonian Slavs also shows us how these myths ignore the realities of group and individual self-identification. For most of its modern history Macedonia had been a multi-cultural and isolated region. Therefore, the predominantly peasant population, though some intellectuals as well, had begun developing their own ideas of who they were. To show the differences between nationalist claims from Bulgaria and Serbia and the self-identification of the

Macedonian Slavs, examination of intellectual writings from all three sides will be examined. However, on top of this, I agree strongly with Hobsbawm's assertion that in order to understand the nature of nationalism, as well as its effects, ideas from both above and below must be taken into account. Since most of the Macedonian peasantry remained illiterate until the mid 20th century, finding views "from below" has proven to be quite difficult, though not impossible. For the views of the illiterate masses, there is an abundant resource in the reports of western travelers, overwhelmingly British, who travelled to Macedonia and spoke to common people while recording their words and thoughts into their accounts.

Although the majority of this study will focus on forced assimilation in Macedonia, some analysis will be dedicated in the last chapter to the issue of exclusionary nationalism and its effects on populations. For this section, the Independent State of Croatia's extreme efforts to erase any form of Serbian identity from its lands during World War II will provide the main example. Through my analysis on the forced assimilation of the Macedonian Slavs, as well as the forced expulsion and eradication of the Croatian Serbs, it will be evident that nationalist ideals from the 19th century created the foundations for some of the harshest outcomes of nation-building in the Balkans in the 20th century. Nationalist rhetoric and idealism helped spread the idea that nations, nationality and nationhood, despite how we may try to define them today, were inherent, unchangeable, and therefore beyond any personal sentiment. Because the ultimate goal of national assimilation is for populations to adopt national labels as ascribed them, I will use the term forced "nationalization" interchangeably with forced "assimilation" throughout the text. With this in mind, I hope that this study will not only further our knowledge of nationalism in a general, European context, but also answer the question of why in the previous century the Balkan nations had such a traumatic experience in dealing with the effects of 19th century nationalism, and why many of those problems continue to threaten stability in the region today.

CHAPTER 2

THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION

This woman had suffered more than most other human beings, she and her forebears. A competent observer of this countryside has said that every single person born in it before the Great War (and quite a number who were born after it) has faced the prospect of violent death at least once in his or her life If her own village had not been murdered, she had certainly heard of many that had, and had never had any guarantee that hers would not some day share the same fate.

--Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*

The region of Macedonia lies at the heart of the Balkan Peninsula. Today, it is divided into three main territories: Vardar Macedonia, the former Yugoslav Republic which comprises the modern Republic of Macedonia, Pirin Macedonia, which lies almost entirely within Bulgaria's borders, and Aegean or Greek Macedonia. The region as a whole encompasses the Vardar river valley and stretches roughly from the Aegean port city of Thessaloniki to the Shar Mountains, which creates a natural border between the Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo. Because of its location, Macedonia has historically been seen as a strategic location. The importance of the region was recognized by Otto von Bismarck, who remarked that "those who control the valley of the River Vardar . . . are the masters of the Balkans."²⁰ The importance of the region was also one of the reasons it was known in the 19th and 20th centuries as a "hotbed of unrest". By the time Bismarck made his remark, the various communities that make up the population of Macedonia had been fighting each other and outside powers, but it was the Slavs of Macedonia who seemed to attract the most attention at the end of the 19th century.

Attempting to categorize the Macedonian Slavs on national and ethnic lines has never been an easy thing to do. As late as 1947 Dr. Joseph S. Roucek, chairman of the Department

²⁰ Quoted in Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-1999* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 156.

of Political Science and Sociology at Hofstra College, explained that “The Question, to which nationality do the Macedonians really belong, is the despair of ethnologists and the nightmare of all European cabinets involved in the problem.”²¹ Part of this is because of the ethnic variation that has long been characteristic of Macedonia. By the mid 19th century “Macedonia was Europe’s most enduring and complex multicultural region.”²² In 1903 American journalist Stephen Bonsal, who covered a local Macedonian uprising against the Turks, was surprised by the ethnic variety he encountered there. According to him, “Within a radius of ten miles you will find as many languages spoken.”²³ Because of this, he was skeptical of making any broad statements about the identity of the people; “I would not venture to say where the Slavs or the Greeks or the [Aromanians]²⁴ or the Albanians are in the majority, or to answer the moot question whether the Slavs who are met with belong to the Bulgarian or to the Servian²⁵ family of that race.”²⁶

Another reason why figuring out to which “race” the Macedonian Slavs belong has been such a “nightmare” is because of the three major groups who have been battling over the territory for centuries. According to the *Slavonic Encyclopedia* (1949), “Macedonia has been the common objective of the nationalistic & strategic ambitions of . . . Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece.”²⁷ In the middle ages the region of Macedonia was constantly fought over by the empires of Bulgaria, Serbia and Byzantium. The region had remained a Roman province under Byzantine administration until it became a part of the First Bulgarian Empire in the 9th century. By the time the Ottoman Turks conquered most of the Balkans in the late 14th century, Macedonia was part of the Serbian Empire of Stefan Dushan, whose capital was in Skopje, the modern-day capital of the Republic of Macedonia. If the modern nation-states of

²¹ Joseph S. Roucek, “The Eternal Problem of Macedonia,” *International Journal* 2, no.4 (1947): 301.

²² Glenny, *The Balkans*, 157.

²³ Stephen Bonsal, “The Gordian Knot in Macedonia,” *The North American Review* 177, no.563 (1903): 497.

²⁴ Aromanians or “Vlachs” are a Romanian-speaking minority believed to be descendants of Roman settlers in the Balkans.

²⁵ “Servian” and “Servia” are old forms of “Serbian” and “Serbia”.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Joseph Roucek, ed., *Slavonic Encyclopaedia* (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1949), 734.

Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece can be considered the descendents of the three medieval empires, then the three sides have been battling over Macedonia for more than a millennium. As far as the local, Slavic-speaking inhabitants are concerned, they have been claimed by all three sides for various different reasons. Claims as to what the ethnic background of the Macedonian Slavs is, was not, however much of an issue until the 19th century.

For centuries under Turkish domination virtually all of the Balkan Christians in the Empire were considered Greeks. The Ottoman Empire was divided into a millet system, or a series of confessional communities, where all Orthodox Christians made up one-single millet. In this system the Orthodox Slavs were included with the Greeks; “they were nearly all Christians of the Byzantine type and were regarded as one people, Roum-Milleti (Greek People)” and the land was called “Rumelia”.²⁸ The language spoken by those “Greeks” who would later become Bulgarians or Serbs was simply referred to as Slavic or “Schlavian.” The early 20th century British Traveler Edith Durham, while describing the characteristics of the population of Macedonia, quotes an earlier British traveler from 1673 who wrote that ““Schlavian is spoken in Servia, Bulgaria, and a great part of Macedonia,” which seems to point to the fact that, until they were crystallized into literary form later, Servian and Bulgarian were not markedly differentiated into two tongues.”²⁹ This form of categorization continued into the 19th century. Published in 1824 *A New System of Geography, Ancient and Modern, for the Use of Schools*, claims that in nine provinces, including Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia, “the population of Turkey in Europe is estimated at 9,600,000, consisting principally of Greeks and Turks.”³⁰ By the first half of the 19th century however, Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia had already begun processes of national “awakening”.

In Macedonia Hroch’s “Phase A” of nationalism, which saw cultural and linguistic “revivals” across Europe, began during the second half of the 18th century. Paisius of Hilendar, a Greek Orthodox clergyman, is credited with being responsible for the “Bulgarian

²⁸ J. Kayser, “Free Macedonia in a New Europe,” *La Jeune Macedonia* 1, no. 5 (May, 1931) given in *The Case For an Autonomous Macedonia: A Symposium*, ed. Chris Anastasoff (Indianapolis: Central Committee of the Macedonian Political Organization of the United States and Canada, 1945), 102.

²⁹ Mary Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans* (London: Edward Arnold, 1905), 60.

³⁰ Jedidiah and Sidney Edwards Morse, *A New System of Geography, Ancient and Modern, for the Use of Schools, Accompanied with an Atlas, Adapted to the Work* (Boston: Richardson & Lord, 1824), 218.

revival”. In 1762, almost half a century before Fichte published his *Addresses to the German Nation*, Paisius had published *Istoriya Slavyanobolgarskaya* (Slav-Bulgarian History). Like Fichte, Paisius was inspired to write his work in response to what he perceived as cultural intrusion, not by the French, but by the Greeks. In his book he attacks those who “turn to a foreign culture and to a foreign tongue and do not care for their Bulgarian language, but learn how to read and speak Greek and are ashamed to call themselves Bulgarians.”³¹ His next line is perhaps the most direct, aimed at those who were able to read his book: “O, senseless and foolish ones! Why are you ashamed to call yourselves Bulgarians and why do you not read and speak your own language?”³² But as Hobsbawm suggests, this period of revival did not include movements for the creation of nation-states. Instead, Paisius calls on Bulgarian-speakers to continue speaking their own language and to know their history, so that they may not be “ridiculed” and “reproached” by the Greeks.³³

The next wave of Bulgarian cultural nationalism came from Dimitar (1810-1862) and Konstantin (1830-1862) Miladinov, who published “Bulgarian Folk Songs” in 1861. Like Paisius of Hilendar, they called for continuation of the use of Bulgarian as opposed to Greek. In a letter dated August 2, 1852, Dimitar Miladinov complains that “In almost sixth-eighths of Macedonia . . . all study in the Greek language and are called Greeks by the Greeks.”³⁴ Their goal was to spread the folk songs they published chiefly among the Bulgarians in order to keep their language and culture “alive”. According to Konstantin Miladinov, “Surely the Bulgarians will not be sheep with a few Greeks as their shepherds . . . that time has irrevocably passed.”³⁵ Again, however, Gellner’s definition of nationalism, the belief that a political and national body should be congruent, was not yet the case.

³¹ Paissi of Hilendar, “Slav-Bulgarian History,” ed. P. Dinekov (1963): 29-30, given in Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History and Bulgarian Language Institute, *Macedonia: Documents and Material*, eds. Voin Bozhinov and L Panayatov (Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Bulgarskata Akademiia na Naukite, 1978), 115.

³² *Ibid.*, 115-116.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ The Miladinov Brothers, “Correspondence,” (1964): 17-21, given in Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History and Bulgarian Language Institute, *Macedonia: Documents and Material* [book online] (Sofia: 1978, accessed 1 June 2012); available from <http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/en/ban/nr1.html#1>; Internet.

³⁵ *Ibid.*: 136-138, given in *Macedonia: Documents and Material*.

While Serbia had begun its own cultural revival, mainly through Vuk Karadzic (1787-1864), the father of Serbian folklore, and his attempts at creating a modern, literary Serbian dialect that would be spoken by all South Slavs, Serbian claims over the Slavic population of Macedonia had not yet developed. According to Dunja Rihtman-Augustin, Karadzic's legacy is "not only the discovery of the people and of popular culture but also the establishment of ethnic boundaries, values and patterns of the Serbian nation."³⁶ However, the Macedonians and Bulgarians did not seem to be included in these "boundaries". Karadzic, commenting on some Bulgarian folk-songs from Macedonia, claimed that there were many similarities between Bulgarian and Serbian songs and that some of the Bulgarian songs were probably "Serbian songs adapted to the Bulgarian language". Despite this, he recognized the major linguistic differences between the two peoples.³⁷

After these "awakenings" peoples' views on the inhabitants of Macedonia began to change. The idea of a Bulgarian nation, as we have seen, had already been well developed among its proponents by mid-century, while by 1829 Serbia was able to gain autonomy within the Ottoman Empire through a series of uprisings. According to Edmund Spencer, a British traveler writing in 1850, in Macedonia "the inhabitants are for the most part composed of Rayahs, a mixed race of Greeks, Bulgarians and Servians, who, it cannot be doubted, would join to a man their brethren in faith of Servia and Upper Moesia." He then went on to claim that the greatest danger to Ottoman rule in the region would be "a successful inroad of the Servian nationality into Macedonia; with this people they have the tradition of right, and their former greatness, aided by the powerful ties of race and creed."³⁸ James George Cotton Minchin, the consul-general of Serbia in London, wrote in 1886 that "The language spoken by the majority of the tillers of Macedonian soil is a Slav dialect,

<http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/en/ban/nr1.html#1>.

³⁶ Dunja Rihtman-Augustin, *Ethnology, Myth and Politics: Anthropologizing Croatian Ethnology*, trans. and ed. Jasna Capo Zmegac (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 15.

³⁷ Vuk Karadzic, "Dodatak k Sanktpeterburskim Sravniteljnim Rjecnicima Sviju Ezika I Narecija s Osobitim Ogledima Bugarska Jezika," Vienna, 1822, given in *Macedonia: Documents and Material*. <http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/en/ban/nr1.html#1>.

³⁸ Edmund Spencer, *Travels in European Turkey, in 1850: Through Bosnia, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thrace, Albania, and Epirus; With a Visit to Greece and the Ionian Isles, vol. II* (London: Colburn and Co., 1851), 30.

which is not Bulgarian. If it be not Serb, it resembles Serb much more closely than it resembles Bulgarian; indeed the Macedonian dialect is no more Bulgarian than the Croatian dialect is Bulgarian.”³⁹ While the Miladinov brothers wrote their works in the Macedonian dialect, setting up the foundations for a literary Macedonian language, they and other revivalists considered themselves culturally to be Bulgarians. Despite this, as we can see from the above statements, more and more people were beginning to view the Macedonian Slavs in racial-linguistic terms that attached them to either Serbia or Bulgaria.

In 1870 a Bulgarian Exarchate was established in the Ottoman Empire as a way to curb the influence of the Greek Patriarch, and therefore, a Bulgarian nation was recognized by the Ottoman Porte.⁴⁰ After the establishment of the Church, an imperial decree was issued which allowed for a plebiscite to be taken in “disputed” areas to determine to which branch of the Orthodox Church they would belong.⁴¹ The Slavic population in Macedonia voted overwhelmingly in favor of joining the Exarchate. According to the Bulgarian Institute of History, it was a political move rather than a religious one. In their view it was mostly linguistic in nature, as the Slav-speaking populations of Macedonia would rather hear sermons and attend schools taught in a familiar language. As a way to assert the Bulgarian character of the Macedonian Slavs, the Institute claims that “the resistance against the spiritual domination of the Constantinople Patriarchate . . . was the result of the nation-wide demand for introducing the native Bulgarian language in the schools.”⁴² Whether the Macedonian Slavs overwhelmingly chose to adhere to the Bulgarian Exarchate to assert their own nationality or to simply hear a language closer to their own than Greek, a battle over to which race the Slavs belonged had begun and would last well into the 20th century. According to Ivo Banac, with the establishment of the Exarchate came “the church schools,

³⁹ James George Cotton Minchin, *The Growth of Freedom in the Balkan Peninsula: Notes of a Traveller in Montenegro, Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece* (London: John Murray, 1886), 94.

⁴⁰ Col. L. Lamouche, “A Few Words on the History of Macedonia,” given in *The Case For an Autonomous Macedonia*, 61.

⁴¹ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 117.

⁴² Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, *Documents and Materials on the History of the Bulgarian People*, eds. D. Kosev and H. Hristov (Sofia: Pub. House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1969), 6.

where instruction was offered in the national language of the patron church.”⁴³ It was through these church schools that the battle between the Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians was waged, with propaganda used as the main weapon.

Writing in 1905, almost three decades after the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate, Edith Durham reveals that “the Greek, Bulgar, Serb and [Aromanians] build schools that are surprisingly fine and large, and the place reels with propaganda. For in a school in Turkish territory you do not merely learn the usual subjects: you are taught to which nationality you really belong.”⁴⁴ And it seems that in this battle the Bulgarians gained the upper hand. Paul N. Milioukoff, a Russian minister, claimed in a speech to the Duma in 1913 that “Since 1870, since the first Slav church, namely the Bulgarian church, was established on the Balkans, the Slavic inhabitants of Macedonia have considered themselves, in all consciousness, as Bulgarians.”⁴⁵ Steven Bonsal similarly wrote that “taking my own personal experiences for the little they are worth, I must say that the great majority of the Christians I met in Macedonia looked like Bulgars, and said they were of Bulgarian stock.”⁴⁶ Still, even with the adherence of the majority of the Macedonian Slavs to the Exarchate, and the seemingly successful effects of Bulgarian propaganda, it is hard to see this as a symbol of their national consciousness or as a legitimate way to classify them nationally. According to Misha Glenny “adherence to one church or the other was simply the most convenient way of labeling the national or political commitment of a village at a time when national or political consciousness in a modern sense barely existed among the peasantry.”⁴⁷ Glenny here brings up an important point. Up until the 20th century, despite the propaganda efforts, most Macedonian Slavs possessed no real sentiment of ethnic or national identity.

World-renowned Serbian geographer and president of the Serbian Royal Academy of Sciences, Jovan Cvijic, argued at the turn of the century that the Macedonian Slavs were not Bulgarians, but instead a “floating mass” of Slavs with no real national identity, whom could

⁴³ Banac, *The National Question*, 313.

⁴⁴ Durham, *The Burden*, 91-92.

⁴⁵ P.N. Milioukoff “The National Character of the Macedonians,” (Jun., 1913), given in *The Case For an Autonomous Macedonia*, 146.

⁴⁶ Bonsal, “The Gordian Knot”, 499.

⁴⁷ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 198-99.

be swayed by any of the surrounding nationalities offering them a better future.⁴⁸ While Cvijic was respected by scholars around the world, many then and now have written his thesis off as apologetic to Serbian nationalist aims. According to Ivo Banac, the true purpose of Cvijic's argument was to justify Serbian interests in Macedonia by claiming that if the Macedonians were not Bulgarians by nationality, then Serbia had as much of a right to the territory as Bulgaria did.⁴⁹ Despite the controversy, other documents seem to strengthen Cvijic's claim. The left-wing British journalist Henry Noel Brailsford led a relief mission in Macedonia at the turn of the century. In his book *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future* (1905), he describes how he questioned a group of boys from a village in the Macedonian lakeside town of Ohrid. He brought them up to the ruins of the castle of medieval Tsar Samuel. There, he asked the boys whom they thought had built the castle, and was surprised when they answered him: "The Free Men." When he asked them to whom they were referring to, they responded that it was their "grandfathers". Brailsford then finally asked them if these men were Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians or Turks. He recorded their answer as being: "They weren't Turks, they were Christians." And this seemed to be about the measure of their knowledge.⁵⁰ The examples go beyond a group of young boys, however. Later on in his book, Brailsford recorded a conversation he had with a peasant in the southwestern city of Bitola. He asked the peasant whether his village was Greek or Bulgarian. The man answered him that it was Greek four years prior, but now it was Bulgarian. Somewhat shocked, Brailsford asked the man how that was possible. The man's "quite natural" response went like this:

We are all poor men, but we want to have our own school and a priest who will look after us properly. We used to have a Greek teacher. We paid him [5 Pounds] a year and his bread, while the Greek consul paid him another [5 Pounds]; but we had no priest of our own. We shared a priest with several other villages, but he was very unpunctual and remiss. We went to the Greek Bishop to complain, but he refused to do anything for us. The Bulgarians heard of this and they came and made us an offer. They said they would give us a priest who would live in the village and a teacher to

⁴⁸ D.G.H., "The Balkan Lands," review of *Remarks on the Ethnology of the Macedonian Slavs*, by Jovan Cvijic, *The Geographical Journal* 28, no.5 (Nov., 1906): 499-500.

⁴⁹ Banac, *The National Question*, 313.

⁵⁰ Henry Noel Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future* (London: Methuen & co., 1905), 99-100.

whom we need pay nothing. Well, sir, ours is a poor village, and so of course we became Bulgarians.⁵¹

Edith Durham, who had visited Macedonia at the same time as Mr. Brailsford, recorded meeting a man who told her he was a Greek born in Bulgaria, though his father was Serbian and his children were Montenegrins.⁵² A reviewer of Cvijic's work in 1906, although recognizing that it may indeed justify Serbian claims over Macedonia, agreed with his overall thesis. According to him, "nine-tenths of the Macedonian Christian population is still quite fluid, and . . . the stress laid by rival claimants on linguistic and historical considerations has created a mass of false opinion in Europe, which is not shared in the country itself."⁵³ This statement is further strengthened by the fact that even some of the Macedonian Slavs recognized the fluidity of identity in their homeland. Professor V.K. Sugareff, an American history professor who was born in the present-day city of Bitola, wrote that "coercion is the principle weapon by which the people of Macedonia have often been forced to adopt now this, now that nationality. Those of us who lived there in the pre-revolutionary days . . . know well how a whole village or community would change its nationality over night."⁵⁴ As the 20th century progressed, a firm ethnic and national identity among the Macedonians had still not quite taken hold. According to Gordon Gordon-Smith in his 1922 article *Balkan Problems and Their Solution*, "The population speaks Serbian, Bulgarian, Greek, and Turkish, with here and there a Rumanian-speaking village; but a national feeling is not yet a living force. The future is in the hands of the schoolmaster."⁵⁵

For most of the Macedonians, identity did not seem to be something that was fixed or inherent. We can see that for many of them the most important form of identity was to which church they belonged; something that could be changed several times in a lifetime. But while their identities remained fluid, the connection between race and language had already been made in most of Europe, including Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece, and even among some of the

⁵¹ Ibid., 102.

⁵² Durham, *The Burden*, 59.

⁵³ D.G.H., "The Balkan Lands", 500.

⁵⁴ V.K. Sugareff, "Solution of the Macedonian Question," (Sep., 1939), given in *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*, 137.

⁵⁵ Gordon Gordon-Smith, "Balkan Problems and Their Solution," *Advocate of Peace Through Justice* 84, no. 4 (April, 1922): 145.

Macedonians themselves. According to David Starr Jordan, writing on the eve of armistice in 1918, “in these regions . . . “race” is determined mainly by language.”⁵⁶ Carl Darling Buck, from the University of Chicago, recognized early in the 20th century that nationality is something assumed, that changes with historical development and is not fixed or inherent. He also recognized the importance of language and its often perceived connection with race. According to him, “it is the linguistic descent which is really demonstrable, and which is instinctively felt as evidence of national descent.”⁵⁷ With language seen as an outer sign of one’s inner-self, much like skin color, the identity of the Macedonian Slavs would become more fixed. When the connection between nationality and confessional identity was overshadowed by these more inherent, fixed categorizations, the identity of the Macedonian Slavs had become racialized, the outcome of which was their attachment, in a national sense, to the Bulgarians or the Serbs. This, I argue, is the beginning of what would directly lead to the forced assimilation of the Macedonian Slavs in the 20th century.

Whereas in most of the 19th century the majority of questions pertaining to the Macedonian Slavs dealt with what language they spoke and to what church they belonged, at the end of the 19th century the question turned to race. Since 1893 the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), whose leaders were educated intellectuals, often teachers in Exarchate schools who declared themselves Bulgarians, had been preparing a major uprising against the Turks. Their goal however, was not the inclusion of Macedonia into Bulgaria, but rather the establishment of a free and independent Macedonian state. Their two main slogans were “Freedom or Death” and “Macedonia for the Macedonians.”⁵⁸ In 1903, a general uprising occurred in the Manastir Vilayet of Macedonia, carried out by the IMRO. The revolt, referred to as the “Ilinden Uprising”, after a brief period of small victories was in general a huge failure. It saw the dispersal of the IMRO and a huge influx of rival groups, mainly pro-Greek “Andartes” and pro-Serb “Chetniks”. Through these armed bands

⁵⁶ David Starr Jordan, “The Balkan Tragedy,” *The Journal of Race Development* 9, no.2 (Oct., 1918): 130.

⁵⁷ Carl Darling Buck, “Language and the Sentiment of Nationality,” *The American Political Science Review* 10, no. 1 (Feb., 1916): 47.

⁵⁸ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 203.

the governments of Greece and Serbia began actively vying for control of Macedonia and its population, whence the question of races began truly taking shape.

In September of 1903, only one month after the Ilinden Uprising, the famed archaeologist and expert on the Balkans, Sir Arthur Evans, traveled to Macedonia to provide aid for the victims of Turkish reprisals. He claimed that the overwhelming majority of people he came across spoke “characteristically Bulgarian dialects.”⁵⁹ Despite this, he discovered some groups of Slavic speakers who were Greek in sentiment. He wrote of them; “the artificial annexations do not go very far. The language of the villagers remains [Bulgarian], and the deep underlying instincts of race are only held in temporary suspense.”⁶⁰ Another article published in 1903 by Charles Johnston, a former member of the “Bengal Civil Service”, claimed that “of the three million inhabitants of Macedonia, five-sixths are of Bulgarian race and speech.”⁶¹ Bulgarian scholar Svetozar Tonjoroff, writing just two months after Bulgaria officially became an independent state in 1908, declared that the only “logical heirs” to Macedonia and thus access to the Aegean Sea were Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. While he explains that Austria-Hungary was motivated by military and economic factors, the Bulgarians “rest their case confidently upon the argument that the numerically dominant unit in the population of Macedonia is Bulgarian by blood, language and sympathies.”⁶²

While rhetoric of the racial connections between the Macedonians and Bulgarians had its supporters, rival claims from the Serbs also began gaining support. Jovan Cvijic, who claimed the Macedonians themselves did not possess a strong sense of national identity, argued that at least racially and culturally, they were closer to the Serbs. According to him, Bulgarian claims over Macedonia were insufficient in the first place, since the Bulgarians were not a legitimate nation. In his mind the term “Bulgarian” did not historically refer to any nation, but was synonymous with the Turkish word “rayah”, which denoted the lower-

⁵⁹ Sir Arthur J. Evans “Who the Macedonians Are,” (Sep., 1903), given in *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*, 37.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶¹ Charles Johnston, “Macedonia’s Struggle for Liberty,” *The North American Review* 176, no.555 (Feb., 1903): 224.

⁶² Svetozar Tonjoroff, “Bulgaria and the Treaty of Berlin,” *The North American Review* 188, no. 637 (Dec., 1908): 841.

class tax payers of the Ottoman Empire.⁶³ Furthermore, he separated the Slavs of the Balkans into two “types”, the western “Yugo-slavs” and the Bulgarians, the former of which consists of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and includes almost all of Macedonia. While he argued that the Macedonians, along with the Serbs, were different from the Bulgarians in “racial composition”, he also claimed that the Macedonians have Serbian origins.⁶⁴ After describing the Muslims of western Macedonia as Islamicized Serbs who spoke Serbian, he wrote that the Macedonians along with the “Shops” of western Bulgaria are “lacking in national consciousness, although they have preserved some traces of historical Serbian traditions.”⁶⁵ Whether or not Ivo Banac is correct in his assertion that the purpose behind Cvijic’s views was to justify Serbian claims over Macedonia at Bulgaria’s expense, other Serbian intellectuals agreed with Cvijic. The Serbian-American professor Milivoy Stanoyevich, inspired by Cvijic’s own thesis, argued that there were three “Yugo-Slav types”. These three types were the “Dinaric type”; which included the Croats and Slovenes, the “Pannonic type” which included the Serbs in Vojvodina and Croats of Slavonia, and then the “Macedonian type” which included the Macedonians, Shops and southern Serbs, though excluding the Bulgarians entirely. While Stanoyevich admitted that the Macedonian type “lacks the deep national consciousness” of the other two “types”, they are all “not only of one race, but one state and one nation.”⁶⁶ Other Serbian scholars, such as Aleksander Belic and Milos Milojevic claimed that Serbs had settled Macedonia in the middle-ages and therefore, the Macedonians were of Serbian origin.⁶⁷

Despite Serbian claims, between 1912 and 1918 when Macedonia was a constant battleground, rhetoric racially linking the Macedonians and Bulgarians continued. The First and Second Balkan Wars (1912-1913) and World War I had seen Macedonia liberated from the Turks only to be virtually tossed around between the hands of Serbia, Greece and

⁶³ Jovan Cvijic, “The Zones of Civilization in the Balkan Peninsula,” *Geographical Review* 5, no.6 (Jun., 1918): 476.

⁶⁴ Jovan Cvijic, “The Geographical Distribution of the Balkan Peoples,” *Geographical Review* 5, no.5 (May, 1918): 356.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 358.

⁶⁶ Milivoy Stanoyevich, “The Ethnography of the Yugo-Slavs” *Geographical Review* 7, no.2 (Feb., 1919): 97.

⁶⁷ Banac, *The National Question*, 310-312.

Bulgaria. By the time World War I broke out, most of Vardar Macedonia had been incorporated into Serbia. In 1915, a newspaper article quoted an official from Bulgaria, which had joined the Triple Alliance mostly in hopes to regain lost territory in Macedonia, claiming that the Bulgarian army would switch sides and join the Entente under one condition. According to the official, the condition was a national one: “We will fight for but one end. That is to extend our frontiers until they embrace the people of our blood.”⁶⁸ Here, he is referring to both Thrace and Macedonia, which were annexed by Serbia and Greece only two years earlier in the Second Balkan War. The official went on to claim that “already we have 600,000 refugees, largely from Serbian and Grecian Macedonia . . . They are our brothers-of our own blood.”⁶⁹

After the Treaty of Versailles the region of Macedonia was officially divided between Greece, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, with Vardar Macedonia remaining under Serbian rule. In 1919 the Macedonian-born V.K. Sugareff, however, declared that the Macedonian question was by no means settled. He complained that in the Greek part of Macedonia (Aegean Macedonia), declaring those Slavic-speakers who sympathized with Greece as Greeks by nationality was against the Paris Peace Conference’s principle of settling international disputes along “national lines.”⁷⁰ He then claimed that “the Bulgarians from Macedonia and Bulgaria have a common history. They have both worked and fought for their national unity. They are one race, speak the same language, and have the same future aspiration.”⁷¹ After a 1934 visit to Yugoslavia, the French scholar Henri Pozzi declared that “Five to six thousand Macedonians . . . have sought refuge in Bulgaria since the annexation of their country by Greece and Serbia...Of the same blood, the same language, the same traditions as the Bulgars, they have been received by them as brothers.”⁷²

⁶⁸ United Press, “Says Bulgaria’s Price is Serbian Macedonia”, *New York Times*, August 11, 1915, <http://www.nytimes.com/>.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ V.K. Sugareff, “The Bulgarian Nationality of the Macedonians,” *The Journal of Race Development* 9, no.4 (Apr., 1919): 389.

⁷¹ Ibid., 392.

⁷² Henri Pozzi, “The Macedonian Question,” given in *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*, 112.

While most of Europe had begun to recognize a racial connection between the Macedonian Slavs and either Bulgarians or Serbs, many Macedonians began to develop their own identities. A *National Geographic* article from 1912 claimed that “there are in Macedonia four Christian communities – Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, and Rumans, or Kutzo-Vlachs; each of those nationalities is connected by ties of language and political aspirations with one or other of the free Balkan states.”⁷³ While this statement may be relevant to certain intellectual and elite groups in Macedonia, it cannot be true for the peasant masses. As Eugen Weber explains, for French peasants to have shared any form of identity with the French state it would have taken roads, education, military service, railroads and economic circulation, or, as Weber calls it, “modernity”.⁷⁴ Without such modern intrusions “the people of whole regions felt little identity with the state or with people of other regions.”⁷⁵ While Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek church-schools had been teaching the Macedonians to what nationality they belonged, we have already seen in Brailsford’s interview that peasants interpreted their teachings much differently than they were taught. Therefore, Brailsford is correct in his idea that “a nation of peasants . . . will readily develop a genuine local patriotism. And this indeed has happened despite adverse circumstances.”⁷⁶ The truth in this statement is supported even by Bulgarian travelers who recorded their discoveries in Macedonia. Vasil Kanchov (1862-1904), a Bulgarian scholar, wrote in his posthumous publication *Orohydrography of Macedonia* that Macedonia’s ethnographic borders are well-defined since “the Bulgarian tribe is settled in the entire country.”⁷⁷ Despite the fact he refers to the people as Bulgarians, he also expressed that “the local Bulgarians and [Aromanians] who live in the area of Macedonia call themselves Macedonians, and the surrounding nations also call them Macedonians,” while the Albanians, Greeks and Turks do not refer to themselves as such.⁷⁸

⁷³ Luigi Villari, “The Races and Religions of Macedonia,” *National Geographic*, 1912, 1125. http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/en/ng_1912/text.html.

⁷⁴ Weber, *Peasants*, 486.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Brailsford, *Macedonia*, 122.

⁷⁷ Vasil Kanchov, *Orohidrografia na Makedonija* (Plovdiv: Bulgarsko Knizhovno Druzhestvo v Sofia, 1911), 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Therefore, it is evident that local “patriotism” had been occurring from both above and below.

As far back as 1875, Djordjija Puljevski, a Macedonian Slav and a self-taught linguist, published *A Dictionary of Three Languages*. These three languages were Albanian, Turkish and a Slav language regarded by most people as Bulgarian or Serbian, but he called it Macedonian. In this book he made a striking claim for its time:

What do we call a nation? – People of the same origin, who speak the same words and who live and make friends of each other, who have the same customs and songs and entertainment are what we call a nation, and the place where that people lives is called the people's country. Therefore the Macedonians also are a nation and the place which is theirs is called Macedonia.⁷⁹

Edith Durham, while trying to further show the fluidity of identities in Macedonia, hinted at the development of a separate Macedonian identity. While acknowledging the strong Bulgarian element in Macedonia, she claimed to have “even met people who believe there is a special race which they call ‘Macedonian,’ whose ‘cause’ they wish to aid.”⁸⁰ According to Brailsford, who recognized that there were areas in Macedonia which were entirely Serbian and some which were entirely Bulgarian, “their ballads of revolt, in which the word “Macedonia” recurs in every chorus, prove that they have already a fatherland.”⁸¹

In 1902, even before Jovan Cvijic’s idea that the Macedonians were a fluid “mass” apart from the Bulgarians had gained recognition, a group of Macedonian intellectuals in St. Petersburg established a “Slav-Macedonian Student Society.” Their leader was a young scholar by the name of Dimitrija Chupovski. According to the pro-Bulgarian IMRO revolutionary leader Hristo Shaldev, “Concerning the nationality of the Macedonian Slavs [Chupovski] flatly declared that foreign propaganda had made them into “Bulgars”, “Serbs” and “Greeks” – whereas they are Slav Macedonians with their own identity and language.”⁸² Fearing that Chupovski and the Student Society might be Turkish spies, Shaldev intercepted a letter written by Chupovski to another member of the Student Society. In the letter,

⁷⁹ Djordjija M. Puljevski, *Recnik od Tri Jezika* (Belgrade: Drazavnoj Stampariji, 1875), 48.

⁸⁰ Edith Durham, *The Burden*, 53.

⁸¹ Brailsford, *Macedonia*, 122.

⁸² Hristo Shaldev and Ilia Schaldev, *Extracts From the Memoirs of Hristo Shaldev: Macedonian Revolutionary 1876-1962* (Adelaide: Macedonian Patriotic Organization, 1993), 19.

Chupovski ordered the other student to spread the idea of a separate Macedonian identity. He assured the student that if he were to successfully promote the notion that “the Slavs of Macedonia are not the same as Serbs and Bulgars . . . then the people and many representatives of its intelligentsia will come to recognize themselves as sons of a Slav Macedonian tribe which has closer links to the Russians than to the Serbs and Bulgars.”⁸³

The members of the Student Society were heavily influenced by Krste Misirkov (1874-1926), who was at times conflicted about his own identity. At the turn of the century, Misirkov published his book *On Macedonian Matters*, which advocated a separate, Macedonian state and people while at the same attempting to establish a literary language. In his book he declared that “we Macedonians have our own history and we are a nation.”⁸⁴ He also considered the central Macedonian dialect, in which he was writing, to be the literary language of the Macedonians.⁸⁵ Despite the convictions in his book, he also, later in his life, sometimes referred to himself and the Macedonian Slavs as Bulgarians. According to Ivo Banac, Misirkov’s ideas were quite common during the first half of the 20th century. The reason for such conflicting sentiments, he argues, is because many Macedonian intellectuals “were Bulgars in struggles against Serbian and Greek hegemonism, but within the Bulgar world they were increasingly becoming exclusive Macedonians.”⁸⁶ The latter point, however, is the most important, since many of the Macedonians who recognized their ethnicity as Bulgarian began to develop their own “Macedonian” identity, especially among the IMRO.

Brailsford, writing about the character of the Macedonian revolutionaries or “Comitadjis” of the IMRO, explained that their “dream is that Macedonia should be certainly a Slav, but not definitely a Bulgarian, country,”⁸⁷ and that “their passion is not for their race but for their country.”⁸⁸ Austrian Lieutenant Hermenegild Wagner, who served with the Bulgarians during the First Balkan War, wrote that “there is no distinction amongst the

⁸³ Ibid., 17-18.

⁸⁴ Krste Misirkov, *Za Makedonskite Raboti: Jubilejno Izadanie po Povod na Stogodinsninata Od Ragjanjeto na Avtorot* (Skopje: Institut Za Makedonski Jazik “Krste Misirkov”, 1974), 131.

⁸⁵ Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict*, 50.

⁸⁶ Banac, *The National Question*, 327.

⁸⁷ Brailsford, *Macedonia*, 124.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 121.

Macedonians; professors or illiterate, they were all in the first place Macedonians.”⁸⁹ Though they were foreign observers, Lt. Wagner and Brailsford’s statements effectively portray many of the Macedonians’ own sentiments. Hristo Shaldev, the IMRO leader who was suspicious of Dimitrija Chupovski and the Slav-Macedonian Student Society for their promotion of a separate Macedonian nationality, declared that he and the Organization were fighting for an autonomous Macedonia rather than its incorporation into Bulgaria, and that for this, they were often considered to be separatists. In defiance of such claims, his response was that “If our belief in the importance of achieving the freedom of Macedonia is classified by them as separatism, then we accept this charge and its political consequences.”⁹⁰

Although the Macedonians’ self-identification became more and more pronounced throughout the first half of the 20th century, few outside of Macedonia accepted such views. A Bulgarian scholar going by the name “Macedonicus” published a short book in 1948 repudiating the ideals of a separate Macedonian nation. In it, he cites Stalin’s claim that “community of language is one of the characteristic features of a nation” and declares that “since the language of the Macedonian Slavs is Bulgarian, it follows, according to Stalin’s definition above, that the Macedonian Bulgarians possess the most distinguishing feature; namely, the community of language which makes them a part of the Bulgarian nation.”⁹¹ Macedonicus, in order to prove his point, then cites a speech given by James Bryce to the House of Lords in 1920 in which he declared “The population of southern Macedonia . . . is inhabited by a Bulgarian population. That is a population Bulgarian in race, Bulgarian in speech, Bulgarian in tradition and in ecclesiastical organization.”⁹² Macedonicus’ overall thesis is that no Macedonian nation or ethnicity can truly exist, since everything Macedonian is but a branch of the Bulgarian nation and race. He concludes this thesis by writing, “It is so obvious that the name Macedonian can be and, in reality, is only a geographic expression.”⁹³

⁸⁹ Lt. Hermenegild Wagner, *With the Victorious Bulgarians* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), 227.

⁹⁰ Shaldev, *Memoirs*, 2.

⁹¹ Macedonicus, *Stalin and the Macedonian Question*, trans. and ed. Chris Anastasoff (St. Louis: Pearlstone, 1948), 2-3.

⁹² Quoted in *Ibid.*, 75.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 35.

These views are a product of the nationalist discourse linking race, language and nationality in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is this same view, as will be shown, that was used to justify the forced assimilation of the Macedonian Slavs.

CHAPTER 3

SERBIANIZATION

Permission was tacitly granted for acts of violence and plunder, even for murder . . . A man who saw clearly and with open eyes and was then living could see how this miracle took place and how the whole of a society could, in a single day, be transformed.

--Ivo Andric, *The Bridge on the Drina*

According to E.J. Hobsbawm, the period immediately after World War I, following the Paris Peace Conference, was a “period when the map of Europe was, for the first – and as it turned out for the only – time redrawn according to the principle of nationality.”⁹⁴ Despite the good intentions, this “principle of nationality”, which was supposed to allow the creation of nation-states based on popular sovereignty, was largely an illusion and turned out, as in the case of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia), to be a disaster. The new nation-states created from the ashes of the former empires of Europe included populations that did not quite reflect the national sentiments they claimed to represent. Either these populations felt themselves to belong to states outside the ones they ended up in, or, they felt completely deprived of a state of their own. David Lloyd George, the wartime Prime Minister of Great Britain who played a major role in the Paris Peace negotiations, wrote later that “the most tragic instance of minority oppression in violation of the 1919 Treaty is held to be that of the 600,000 Macedonians now resident within the borders of Yugoslavia.”⁹⁵

Shortly after the Peace Treaties, it was becoming more and more evident to the western world that the Macedonian Slavs in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia had become subject to a process of forced “Serbianization”. He continued in his memoir that the British and American members of the Peace Conference had proposed a regime of local rule in Macedonia, but due to “Franco-Yugoslav” opposition, the proposal was defeated and

⁹⁴ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations*, 3.

⁹⁵ David Lloyd George, “Lloyd George’s Opinion on the Macedonians,” given in *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*, 103.

“ultimately the League Council would appear to have acquiesced in the Serbian contention that no minority problem really existed in Macedonia, as the Macedonians could be regarded overwhelmingly Serb in race and language!”⁹⁶ Unfortunately, like many other western observers, David Lloyd George was late in his realization of what was happening in Macedonia. Even before the outbreak of the First World War a process of forced national assimilation was taking place there. Almost immediately after Serbian troops occupied Macedonia during the First Balkan War in late 1912, the same process of Serbianization Lloyd George was referring to had begun and would last all the way up to the Nazi-invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941. Therefore, the Macedonian Slavs were subject to forced assimilation into the Serbian nation for almost 30 years.

Croatian-American historian Ivo Banac states that prior to the 1880s, Serbia had no genuine claims over the region of Macedonia or the Slavs living there. He also writes that up to this point Serbia accepted Bulgaria’s own claims over Macedonia based on the 1878 Treaty of San Stefano, in which the entire region of Macedonia was for a short time incorporated into Bulgaria.⁹⁷ Most scholars would agree with him while others mention that the Serbs had no intention of actually trying to annex Macedonian territory until an independent Albania was recognized in the summer of 1913, thus shattering Serbia’s hopes of an outlet to the Adriatic.⁹⁸ It would seem then that the forced assimilation of the Macedonian Slavs by Serbia between 1913 and 1941 was simply a technique by a conquering regime to secure loyalty among subjects of a different nationality. This however, is highly debatable. As I have already shown, Serbian intellectuals like Jovan Cvijic had proposed that the Macedonians were racially akin to the Serbs even before the creation of an independent Albanian state. Whatever the reasons for the shift in Serbia’s official policy toward Macedonia, it is hard to deny that during the Balkan Wars the Serbs truly believed they were not only embarking on a mission to free fellow Christian Slavs and increase their territory, but also to unify their new nation-state with fellow Serbian nationals. When Serbian forces

⁹⁶ Ibid., 104.

⁹⁷ Ivo Banac, *The National Question*, 317.

⁹⁸ George Lavan Weissman, introduction to *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky: The Balkan Wars, 1912-13*, by Leon Trotsky (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1980), xvii.

entered Macedonia, it has been recorded that several atrocities were committed against non-Slavs in the region; mostly Albanians and Turks. These atrocities included massacres, looting and expulsion. For the majority of Slavs, however, rather than being faced with massacre, they were instead forced to declare themselves as Serbs, thus avoiding being killed or deported.

The First Balkan War was mostly fought in Macedonia and the region known as Adrianople, on the Black Sea coast. The War was fought between the Balkan League, which included Montenegro, Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria, against what was left of the Ottoman Empire. While the Bulgarians concentrated their forces on the Adrianople Front, Serbia and Greece invaded Macedonia. For the Slavs of Macedonia the Serbs were seen not only as fellow Orthodox Christians who had come to ease their long sufferings under Islamic rule, but also as fellow Slavs. Their enthusiasm for the new “liberators” would quickly change however. Before the outbreak of hostilities on October 8th, 1912 the Serbs and Bulgarians had signed a treaty which guaranteed the bulk of Macedonia to Bulgaria after the ousting of the Turks, while the very northernmost parts of the region would go to Serbia. A small strip of land between these two zones that was disputed by both parties was to be decided on later through a decision made by the Russian Tsar.⁹⁹ But while the Bulgarian forces were still fighting the Turks on the Adrianople Front, the Serbs had made their way south all the way down to the Macedonian city of Monastir (Bitola), a city well within the boundaries of what was to be conceded to Bulgaria. Once the Serbs occupied these areas they made a secret treaty with the Greeks to divide Macedonia between themselves at Bulgaria’s expense. It didn’t take long for the local Slavs to realize that the Serbian and Greek armies had no intentions of leaving. One Bulgarian newspaper in the city of Thessaloniki complained that in the occupied territories both the Serb and Greek armies “in their blind chauvinism take no account of the national sentiments of the people temporarily subject to them.”¹⁰⁰ Despite this, the majority of the Macedonians still believed that the Belgrade government would, after the war was over, adhere to the treaty with Bulgaria or grant the Macedonians some form of

⁹⁹ Banac, *The National Question*, 317.

¹⁰⁰ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Intercourse and Education, *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1914), 50.

autonomy.¹⁰¹ This was never to take place. On June 16, 1913, Bulgaria attacked the Serb and Greek forces in Macedonia once they realized that their former allies had no intentions of giving up the territory. In response Serbia, Greece, Turkey, and Romania all declared war on Bulgaria. This was the Second Balkan War. After the war the Bulgarians lost almost all of their gains from the first war, and the region of Macedonia was partitioned between Greece and Serbia. The Bulgarians were able to retain only 10% of the easternmost part of Macedonia. Once the largest portion of Macedonia, Vardar Macedonia, had been annexed to Serbia, mass forced conversions into the Serbian nation had begun.

The Second Balkan War officially ended with the Treaty of Bucharest on August 10, 1913. That same month an international commission organized by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was sent to Macedonia in order to report on the causes and effects of the wars. The commission consisted of members from Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Russia and the United States. Its president was the French senator, Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, who led the inquiry for five weeks, visiting all of the Balkan countries involved in the wars but focusing mostly on Macedonia, which endured the bulk of the fighting. In 1914 the commission published the information collected during the inquiry in the *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*. The *Report* stands as the most detailed source of the atrocities committed during the Balkan Wars, as well as the forced assimilations that took place immediately after them. While the Commission spends a great amount of detail describing atrocities and forced assimilations in Greece and Bulgaria, Macedonia under both Serb and Greek occupation offers the most numerous examples of forced assimilation. It is important to note that the Commission's report often refers to the Macedonian Slavs as Bulgarians, and rarely takes into account some of the uniquely Macedonian characteristics of the population. The *Report* however, was written mostly by western statesmen who viewed the world as populated by nations and races. Considering the current ethnographic statistics given at the time¹⁰², it makes sense that the Commission would view the nationality of the Slavs as Bulgarian,

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰² In 19th and early 20th century demographic maps of Macedonia, the Slavs are all referred to as either Bulgarians or Serbs.

although as I have shown in the previous chapter national identities in the region were by no means fixed at the time of the inquiry. With this in mind, it is also important to note that the Commission refers to the forced “Serbianization” program in Macedonia as the “denationalization” of the Macedonian-Bulgarians. While this term may be proper in some cases, especially for the Bulgarian priests and teachers, who possessed more firm ideas of nationality, the same term cannot be applied for the majority of peasants. It would instead be appropriate to replace the Commission’s term “denationalization” with “nationalization”, since for most of the peasants, Macedonia’s annexation to Serbia was the first time that they had ever been part of a nation-state.

When Serb forces entered Macedonia in 1912, most of them carried with them idealistic dreams of the unification of all the Serb lands and peoples. To them, they weren’t conquering any territories, they were regaining them. Although Hobsbawm and Hroch place the beginning of the “apogee” of nationalism, when nationalism gained widespread popular-support, after the end of World War I, in the case of Serbia it had already begun by 1912. According to Eugen Weber, in 19th century France “schooling taught hitherto indifferent millions the language of the dominant culture, and its values as well, among them patriotism.”¹⁰³ Weber places the occurrence of this between 1880 and 1910. While France had a much longer tradition as a nation-state, Serbia had been independent since the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, and it is reasonable to assume that by 1912, although maybe not as widespread as in France, education had spread to at least some portion of the peasant population.

Even if the peasant masses remained largely untouched by central state education in Serbia, there were other ways that the Serbian national ideal could have been transmitted to them. Ivo Banac writes that even before Serbia’s independence, the people had “maintained a collective memory of their medieval statehood, and this memory survived in various forms – in the consciousness of national elites but also in part in popular imagination.”¹⁰⁴ This “collective memory” mostly survived through oral poetry. Milman Parry (1902-1935), a scholar on epic poetry, recorded a vast number of South-Slavic oral poems in Bosnia-

¹⁰³ Weber, *Peasants*, 494.

¹⁰⁴ Banac, *The National Question*, 23.

Herzegovina in the 1930s. What he discovered through his studies was that among the most illiterate peoples of the region, oral poetry was sung in a “fixed verse” that has a “hold” on the “thought and conduct of the Southern Slavs.”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, it is evident that well into the 20th century oral poems had survived among the peasantry. By far the most popular Serbian hero in epic poetry was Prince Marko Mrnjavcevic (1335-1395). One poem, titled “the Birth of Marko”, claims that Marko was born on a night when “darkness covered the castle in the city of Prilep.”¹⁰⁶ The significance of such poems is that Prilep, as well as other parts of Marko’s Kingdom, are in central Macedonia. Therefore, even if there were soldiers who lacked formal education, these stories would have likely been in their minds as they marched from Skopje in the north to Bitola in the south, passing through cities like Prilep on the way.

The fact that they had preconceived notions of national unification with the Macedonian Slavs shows that many of the claims made by Serbs were of a genuine nationalistic nature. Since we know, however, that the Macedonians had for most of the previous century been developing their own identities, it didn’t take long for many of the Serbs to realize their preconceived notions about the character and sentiments of the Macedonians were wrong. The *Report* tells us that there was some shock among the Serb forces once they encountered the reality of a distinct Macedonian culture different from their own:

The Servian soldier, like the Greek, was firmly persuaded that in Macedonia he would find compatriots, men who could speak his language and address him with *jivio* or *zito*. He found men speaking a language different from his, who cried *hourrah!* He misunderstood or did not understand at all. The theory he had learned from youth of the existence of a Servian Macedonia and a Greek Macedonia naturally suffered.¹⁰⁷

But this didn’t stop them; these lands were still Serbian lands and the people still Serbs, whether or not the majority of people they came across considered themselves to be. To the Serbs, if there were any elements present among the Slavs in Macedonia that seemed foreign, it was due to outside influences. The *Report* confirms this in the statement that the soldiers

¹⁰⁵ Milman Parry, “Whole Formulaic Verse in Greek and Southslavic Heroic Song,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 64 (1933): 179.

¹⁰⁶ D.J. Filipovic, *Podoljubive Pesme: Kosovski Bozuri, Kraljevic Marko – Kotarski Serdari Oslobodjenje* (Belgrade: Srpska Knjizevna Zadruga, 1938), 61.

¹⁰⁷ Carnegie Endowment, *Report*, 50-51.

believed “it was only agitators and propagandist Bulgarians who instilled into the population the idea of being Bulgarian. The agitators must be driven out of the country, and it would again become what it had always been, Servian . . . accordingly they acted on this basis.”¹⁰⁸

The support for the Serbian annexation of Macedonia among the Serbian population was no less enthusiastic than it was among the soldiers themselves. Like the soldiers who entered the Macedonian theatre of war, the Serbian population also had notions that they were “liberating” fellow Serbs and re-claiming Serbian land. Inspired by the nationalist perceptions employed by Serbian scholars like Cvijic, along with the dream of a Greater Serbia that would reinstate the Medieval Serbian Empire, transmitted through epic and oral poetry, the Serbian population rejoiced at the Serbian acquisition of Macedonia, despite the agreement with Bulgaria.

Already during the First War, before Serbia had exposed its plan to annex Macedonia, Serbs were not ready to give up the land. In a diary written about life during the Balkan Wars, a Serbian woman named Natalija described the interior of a beautiful Orthodox church in Macedonian-Skopje in which the entire iconostasis had been wood-carved. Accompanied by soldiers and diplomats, she recorded one of the men saying “For me this is the most important place for Skoplje¹⁰⁹ and for all of Serbdom. This eagle, which was placed here during the rule of Emperor Dusan, proves that this place is Serbian.”¹¹⁰ Even when it was realized that the population of the newly acquired territories in Macedonia was not as Serbian as the people had thought, they developed the same attitude that the soldiers did. Edith Durham recalls a conversation with a Serbian schoolmaster in Montenegro who “rejoiced greatly” over the news that the Serbs were gaining more and more land in Macedonia from the Turks. An Englishman who was present replied to the Serb that “Serbia cannot annex these places, they are all Bulgar. The inhabitants put the article after the noun. This is well known as a Bulgar peculiarity.” The Serbian schoolmaster, not letting such claims spoil his

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Skoplje is the Serbian-form of Skopje, while Bulgarians generally spell it “Skopie.”

¹¹⁰ *Natalija: Life in the Balkan Powder Keg, 1880-1956*, trans. and ed. Jill A. Irvine and Carol S. Lilly (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008), 156. The soldier was referring to a carving of a double-headed eagle, and just assumed it was a Serbian symbol. Also, the church was built some 300 years after the Serbian emperor Dusan, when Macedonia was part of the Ottoman Empire and no longer belonged to Serbia.

patriotic fervor, replied: “That does not matter. When our army has been there for two years, you will find no articles after nouns there I can assure you.”¹¹¹ With this attitude and the false ideals of liberation and national unification widespread among both the Serbian soldiers and populace, the forced nationalization of the Macedonians could go on with little interference.

The forcing of the Macedonian Slavs into the Serbian nation occurred on three major levels. The first was the closing down of all non-Serbian schools and churches and either the driving out of teachers and priests or converting them to the Serbian cause. The second was the forcing of the masses, mostly peasants, to assume new Serbian identities through the threat of torture, imprisonment or expulsion, and finally, propagation of the idea of a pure Serbian-Macedonia to the younger generations and the uneducated.

The majority of the schoolteachers and clergy in Macedonia during the time of the Serbian conquest were Bulgarians. The priests were members of the Bulgarian Exarchate and the schools taught proper Bulgarian (not Macedonian) to their students. Many of the teachers and priests themselves were from Bulgaria proper and had been for years been engaging in their own propaganda for the sake of spreading the Bulgarian nationality among the peasants. These priests and teachers were part of a tradition of national-propaganda in Macedonia stretching back to the middle of the 19th century.¹¹² Their success varied, but their numbers were large enough to maintain the idea of Bulgarian nationality in Macedonia even after the failed uprisings at the turn of the century. It was because of this that the schools and churches were often the first establishments targeted by the Serbian forced-nationalization campaign. The ultimate aim of suppressing the Bulgarian schools and churches was to rid “Serbian land” of those agitators who had for years brain-washed Serbs into thinking they were either Bulgarians or Macedonians. According to the *Report*, in this they were relatively successful: “the departure of the bishops was the end of the Exarchist church in Macedonia, the end of the official and recognized existence of Bulgarian nationality.”¹¹³

¹¹¹ M.E. Durham, “The Serbs and the Macedonian Struggle,” *La Macedoine* 4, no.168 (May, 1931) given in *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*, 77.

¹¹² See Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, and Henry N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*.

¹¹³ Carnegie Endowment, *Report*, 168.

Those priests and teachers who submitted and declared themselves Serbs and agreed to preach or teach in Serbian were able to hold on to their positions for the most part, but there were few cases in which they cooperated willingly. Most of them, the priests especially, defiantly retained their Bulgarian-identification despite the consequences they faced. When the Bulgarian bishop of the city of Veles, Neophyte, refused to declare his church Serbian and was accused of using the Bulgarian national colors in his sermon, he was forbidden from holding sermons entirely and intimidated into leaving for Bulgaria. Another priest from the city of Skopje was beaten by Serbian soldiers and then forced to flee, leaving behind his wife and children.¹¹⁴ Similar stories occurred throughout Macedonia as “those who continued to declare themselves Bulgarians were exposed to a persecution whose severity varied with the length of their resistance.”¹¹⁵ While the Serbian military was successfully carrying out Serbianization against the Bulgarian clergy, their actions did not go unnoticed. Before Serb soldiers had beaten and tortured Bishop Neophyte’s secretary, and forced him by intimidation to leave his diocese, the Serbian Prime Minister, Nikola Pasic, who was well-aware of the accusations against the bishop, advised the military authorities in Skopje to “treat him as equal to the Servian bishop and with correctitude.”¹¹⁶ This was, obviously, ignored. Another Bulgarian clergyman, Archimandrite Methodius, was beaten by Serbian soldiers until he lost consciousness and was thrown into the streets. When he awoke he immediately departed for Thessaloniki. There, however, the Greeks were carrying out a process of forced assimilation very similar to that of the Serbs, and he was forced almost immediately from there to flee to Bulgaria.¹¹⁷

According to the *Report*, there were two differing points of view among the Serbs on how to deal with the newly liberated territories. On one hand, Nikola Pasic and the Serbian government wished for the local people, whom they too thought were Serbs, to be able to freely express themselves and be treated as equals without regards to religion or

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 52.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 52-3.

nationality.¹¹⁸ This position reflects a much more liberal form of nationalism, one could say, reminiscent of the nation-states of the late 18th and early 19th centuries which Hobsbawm claims were heterogeneous in nature and inclusive in principle. But liberal nationalism in the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe in general has never truly prevailed, especially not during the Balkan Wars and the periods of nation-building among the Balkan nation-states. On the other hand, the Serbian military represented the more Germanic, conservative form of nationalism which sought to unify people based on common racial, cultural or linguistic grounds. While the Serbian government on some occasions called for fair treatment of the peoples in newly acquired territories, they did little to stop the military's practices and in fact, as we shall later see, ultimately assisted in the forced Serbianization of the Macedonians.

With the leaders of "Bulgarism" in Macedonia forcefully removed, the Serbian troops and authorities could now concentrate on the people themselves. According to the *Report*: "The leaders, intellectual and religious, of the revolutionary movement, having been removed, the population of the villages were directly approached and urged to change their nationality and proclaim themselves Servian."¹¹⁹ Another account recorded by the Commission describes how one group of people was threatened with death if they did not declare themselves Serbian:

One Sunday the Servian soldiers surrounded a Bulgarian church. When the worshipers came out at the close of the service, a table stood before the door upon which were a paper and a revolver. They were to choose between these; either they were to sign the paper, signifying that they thus became Servians, or were to suffer death. They all signed.¹²⁰

But it wasn't just soldiers forcing the people to accept Serbian nationhood. Bishop Neophyte, the same Bulgarian bishop whom had himself been forced out by Serbian troops, had complained that the newly instated Serbian priests and schoolmasters were also forcing people to declare themselves Serbs. According to him, these schoolmasters and priests were visiting the villages with soldiers and "forcing the people to write themselves down as

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 159.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 53.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 271-2.

Servians . . . Those who refuse to proclaim themselves Servians are beaten and tortured.”¹²¹ Soon government officials too were partaking in the forced Serbianization of the people. In Skopje, the Serbian-installed government had decided to take a census of the city, during which they ordered all community heads to declare themselves and their communes as Serbian. Those who refused were to be fined and imprisoned.¹²² The meager liberal attitude Prime Minister Pasic showed in the case of the Bishop Neophyte by this time had little effect. According to the *Report*, “The ministerial organs were reduced to saying “that the level of culture” was not sufficiently high among the Macedonians, and that their “State consciousness” was not sufficiently developed to permit the immediate grant of full political rights.”¹²³ With this statement it is clear that despite all the use of force, the Serbian authorities maintained the position that the Macedonians were Serbs. This position held firm, the policy of forced Serbianization continued throughout the interwar period right up until the surrender of Yugoslavia to Nazi Germany in 1941.

In the meantime the name Macedonia was completely erased from within Yugoslavia. Macedonia was instead referred to as “South Serbia” in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and later became part of the “Vardar Banovina” in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. By the time David Lloyd George had realized the mistake made on behalf of the Macedonians during the Paris Peace Conference, other western observers were beginning to take notice. French politician and self-proclaimed “Serbophile” Henri Pozzi wrote of his observations in 1934 that “from one end of the country to the other all traces of “Macedonism” have disappeared; store-signs, menus, inscriptions on tombs, all are in Serbian.”¹²⁴ According to a speech by another French diplomat, Albert Lantoine, “the Serbians are “Serbifying” the country by every possible means . . . asserting that the native inhabitants are primarily Serbian, and that, by forcing them in the schools and churches to call themselves Serbians, they are only restoring them in their original nationality.”¹²⁵ These two quotes show that

¹²¹ Ibid., 53.

¹²² Ibid., 172.

¹²³ Ibid., 164.

¹²⁴ Henri Pozzi, “The Macedonian Question”, 115.

¹²⁵ Albert Lantoine, “The Macedonian Problem,” *Macedonia* 1, no. 10 (Dec., 1932), in *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*, 74.

Serbs had not only continued the process that had begun in 1913, but that two decades later they were still “Serbifying” the country and had, at least on the surface, succeeded in transforming Macedonia into “Southern Serbia.”

Despite this apparent success, many Macedonians, even younger ones who had been subjected to Serbian propaganda through the school system, had continued to deny their Serbian nationality. According to one Bulgarian newspaper on the eve of World War II:

In spite of their manipulations, the Macedonian youth did not give in. The Serbian imperialists are full of rage because yesterday’s children, whom they hoped would help them make Macedonia Serbian, are maturing as young people with a Macedonian consciousness irrespective of whether they are Bulgarians, Wallachians, etc. The Serbian rulers cannot accept the fact that their last hopes in connection with the young people are dying; they tremble at the thought that these young people will join the struggle and will continue the cause of the liberation of their enslaved people.¹²⁶

When the Nazis invaded Yugoslavia in 1941, fascist Bulgaria annexed all of Yugoslav Macedonia, thus achieving a Bulgarian irredentist dream dating back to 1878. The Macedonians, believing their time for freedom from foreign domination had finally come, initially welcomed the Bulgarians as liberators, just as they had done for the Serbs in 1912. The fact that they welcomed foreign troops from a fascist state can make sense once the process of forced Serbianization that the people had been subjected to for three decades is taken into account. That process of forced “Serbianization” shows how nationalism and nationalist ideals are created on foundations that represent no reality, especially not in a homogeneous sense. As I have shown, the Serbs were wrong and their national ideal failed in Macedonia. The Serbs’ claims over the Macedonians were based on language, culture, history and race; all of which were seen as legitimate claims to nationality. What wasn’t taken into account, was what the Macedonians felt themselves to be. Because of this, the Serbian nation-building process, at least in Macedonia, like the Paris Peace Conference itself, was a failure.

¹²⁶ *Makedonsko Delo*, no. 50, September 25, 1927, given in *Macedonia: Documents and Materials*. <http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/en/ban/nr1.html#1>.

CHAPTER 4

BULGARIZATION PT. 1 - PIRIN MACEDONIA

Rise in the morning early
 Return in the evening late
 In the morning take with you joy
 In the evening bring back grief -

--Koco Racin, *Days*

Having lost the First World War on the side of the Tripe Alliance, the Bulgarians were forced to sign the Treaty of Neuilly-Sur-Seine in 1919, with which they lost even more Macedonian territory; mostly the Struma district in southeastern Macedonia. What remained of Bulgaria's Macedonian possessions was the area known as "Pirin Macedonia", with the large cities of Blagoevgrad and Petrich. The Bulgarians considered all Slavic inhabitants of the region of Macedonia to be Bulgarians, including the ones that remained in their borders after World War One. While most of the Slavs living in Pirin Macedonia at the time likewise considered themselves Bulgarians, the interwar Bulgarian government would soon realize that these Bulgarians were not that same as the ones in the rest of the country. These Bulgarians, while they spoke what was considered a Bulgarian dialect and were members of the Bulgarian Exarchate, also considered themselves Macedonians, even after the government renamed Pirin Macedonia the "Petrich District". The inhabitants of Pirin Macedonia often referred to themselves as "Macedonian Bulgarians," but the latter adjective, as we shall see, meant far less to them than the former.

The Petrich district, immediately after the War, was one of the most backward areas in all of Bulgaria. Having had three wars fought on its territory, cities all over the region were devastated, leaving widespread famine and disease, especially among the thousands of refugees pouring in from neighboring parts of Macedonia.¹²⁷ Despite its backwardness,

¹²⁷ James Frusetta, *Bulgaria's Macedonia: Nation-Building and State-Building, Centralization and Autonomy in Pirin Macedonia, 1903-1952* (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland College Park, 2006), 164.

Bulgaria's piece of Macedonia during the interwar period was one of the most important parts of the country. Pirin Macedonia would dominate Bulgarian internal and foreign affairs for most of the 1920s and early 30s. The importance of this region stems from the fact that after the First World War, the re-organized Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) made the Petrich District its base of operations. By this time, the IMRO had abandoned its older tactics of spreading propaganda and inspiring popular revolts, as they had done during the uprisings in 1903, and had instead become a terrorist organization. Since the Bulgarian government tolerated them, members and supporters of the organization from the other parts of Macedonia found refuge in the cities and villages of Pirin. From Pirin, they were able to terrorize the Yugoslav and Greek authorities occupying the regions of Vardar and Aegean Macedonia respectively. Their tactics between both World Wars were limited to crossing the border from Bulgaria, assassinating important Serbian and Greek officials, and then retreating back to the safety of Bulgaria. Several important figures had been assassinated by IMRO members by the mid 1930s, including the King of Yugoslavia, Alexander I, and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou. Bulgaria's toleration of the IMRO had led to a constant barrage of protests from the Yugoslav and Greek governments and even threats of invasion if they did not crack down on the revolutionaries.¹²⁸ While the IMRO continued their terrorist campaigns against the two neighboring countries' officials, Bulgarian officials themselves were not much safer. Bulgarian government officials had to be careful in dealing with Yugoslavia and Greece. When the prime minister of Bulgaria, Alexander Stamboliiski, attempted to make amends with Yugoslavia and crack down on the IMRO with the signing of the Treaty of Nish in 1923, it cost him his life.

Just as importantly, however, and more importantly for this analysis, Bulgaria's internal affairs were greatly affected by the IMRO. While the IMRO brought Bulgaria to the brink of war with both Yugoslavia and Greece several times in the 1920s and 30s,¹²⁹ the organization, with the support of local Macedonians as well as many of the Macedonian émigrés in Bulgaria, was able to maintain a form of local autonomy in the entire region of

¹²⁸ Ibid., 178.

¹²⁹ Stoyan Christowe. *Heroes and Assassins* (New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1935), 17-18.

Bulgarian Macedonia for most of the interwar period. According to James Frusetta "from 1923 until 1934, [the IMRO] provided a parallel organizational structure — “a state within a state” — that rivaled or surpassed that of the central government."¹³⁰ In this “state within a state”, the IMRO was able to not only maintain a parallel form of government, but also a parallel form of identity. With the IMRO in power in Pirin Macedonia, the local population was able to openly declare, boast, and even develop their “Macedonianism”, while in Greek and Yugoslav Macedonia so much as the mentioning of Macedonia could lead to harsh punishment. The Macedonian “state within a state” was also able to resist attempts by the central government to enforce its own process of nationalization and identity formation in Pirin. As Frusetta observes: “Aspects of identity normally state controlled were, instead, under local control. To be Bulgarian in Pirin between 1923-1934 was to be a Macedonian Bulgarian.”¹³¹ It seemed for a time, then, that the Bulgarian nation was multi-national in and of itself.

Stoyan Christowe, a Macedonian-born American journalist, visited Bulgarian Macedonia as a correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News* in 1927, and then again in 1934. By the time Christowe had made his first trip into Bulgarian Macedonia, the IMRO was led by a young revolutionary named Ivan Mikhailov. Mikhailov was in his late twenties when he took control of the IMRO three years earlier, and was already de-facto head of state in Pirin Macedonia when Christowe visited the region. Mikhailov was the immediate successor of Todor Alexandrov, whom Christowe claims is responsible for the revival of the IMRO after WWI. According to Christowe, after Prime Minister Stamboliiski signed of the Treaty of Neuilly, Alexandrov single-handedly took the power in Pirin from the Bulgarian state, whom he treated as a “hostile nation”, and subsequently saw to it that the “Petrich District was kept ever conscious of its Macedonianism.”¹³² Alexandrov then used the IMRO to administer the entire region, improving the region economically and “hygienically”, while at the same time incorporating the name “Macedonian” into all of the organizations in Pirin. Alexandrov even

¹³⁰ Frusetta, *Bulgaria's Macedonia*, 182.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹³² Christowe, *Heroes*, 135.

organized and oversaw taxation in the region in order to support the IMRO.¹³³ Todor Alexandrov, however, was assassinated by dissenting members of the IMRO on August 31, 1924. He was replaced by Ivan Mikhailov, who immediately enacted revenge by slaughtering all those deemed responsible for the assassination.¹³⁴ By the time Stoyan Christowe entered Bulgaria to write about the Macedonian “Comitadjis”, Ivan Mikhailov was a wanted man in Greece and Yugoslavia and was rarely ever seen, much less interviewed by outside press. Christowe, however, received word that Mikhailov would see him, and immediately left for Bulgaria. While Christowe had lived in the United States most of his life, his Macedonian background is what makes his account of Pirin Macedonia under the IMRO so useful. Rather than being treated as an outsider, the members of the IMRO in Pirin spoke to him “as to a Macedonian”.¹³⁵

Christowe headed to Macedonia from Sofia, the Bulgarian capital, with two of Mikhailov’s officers. As soon as the group entered what was technically Macedonian territory although there was no demarcation, he claims that “we all climbed off to touch the soil for whose liberation so much blood has been spilled. The Bulgarians themselves of course regard this as liberated territory, but the Macedonians think differently.”¹³⁶ Christowe was then driven through Pirin Macedonia for over two hours in the night, passing armed IMRO sentry guards at several stops along the way. He was finally taken to a small village at the base of the Rhodope Mountains where Mikhailov was waiting for him in a tiny hut. Christowe describes Mikhailov as being strapped to the teeth in military equipment, including bandoliers and several firearms even though he was in the safety of his own base of operations; a typical “Comitadji”. After speaking to Mikhailov for several hours Christowe notes that no matter what the topic of conversation was, Mikhailov brought it back to the issue of Macedonia. He concludes that “you cannot change Michailoff’s views. You may talk to him, and he will listen, but he has been thinking one thing for ten years, for twenty years,

¹³³ Frusetta, *Bulgaria’s Macedonia*, 175.

¹³⁴ Christowe, *Heroes*, 193.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

ever since he was born – autonomy for Macedonia.”¹³⁷ And this was the man in charge of the entire region of Pirin Macedonia, a region claimed by the Bulgarians ever since the Treaty of San Stefano almost fifty years earlier. Although he considered himself ethnically Bulgarian, Mikhailov’s views nonetheless reflect the parallel identity formation which had been occurring in the region. While the Bulgarians considered the Macedonians “blood brothers”¹³⁸ racially, linguistically and culturally akin to them, the Macedonians had already begun developing their own national ideal, one that did not fit into the official line of Bulgarian nationalism. It would take a strong, central government in Sofia to assimilate these Macedonians into the Bulgarian national ideal, which, at this time, was strongly lacking. Because of the Treaty of Neuilly, Bulgaria’s military was severely weakened and no ruling body in the Bulgarian government until 1934 could stop the development of a Macedonian “state” within Bulgaria’s own borders.¹³⁹

Aside from describing Mikhailov’s character, Christowe provides a detailed picture of the conditions in Pirin Macedonia during the late 20s and early 30s. According to him a state of martial law had been imposed on the District by the Bulgarian government amidst protests from the Yugoslav government. Despite this, he claims that Pirin had remained “independent in practice, if not on paper” and the martial law had still not gone into effect upon his visit.¹⁴⁰ Mikhailov’s administration of Pirin had prevented the central state from expanding into the region until the mid thirties, even in education. While the Bulgarian Ministry of Education directed schools throughout the country, it tried to use education in areas like Macedonia to foster and/or maintain a strict Bulgarian national consciousness. According to a letter from the Ministry of Education to the heads of high schools throughout the country, “the school program of every good modern state pays special attention to the subject of national history . . . make the teenage Bulgarian well aware of his own motherland, to be full of love for it, to be faithful to it and useful to his family through this love.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 159.

¹³⁹ Frusetta, *Bulgaria’s Macedonia*, 178.

¹⁴⁰ Christowe, *Heroes*, 205.

¹⁴¹ Letter given in Frusetta, *Bulgaria’s Macedonia*, 206.

Despite this, the central government was unable to strongly influence education in Pirin Macedonia. The IMRO and its supporters funded schools in Pirin and even though they were supposed to follow the state-sponsored curriculum, the schools were given names after Macedonian revolutionaries in order to keep the Macedonian consciousness of the population alive.¹⁴² While Christowe claims that in the district the IMRO had made “a tiny Macedonian state in which only the speech was Bulgarian, everything else Macedonian”, the local Macedonian dialects flourished despite “proper Bulgarian” being taught in the schools. According to Frusetta, the majority of students in elementary schools across Pirin Macedonia had failed in Bulgarian grammar classes while doing well in other subjects, which he claims proves that it was not simply a lack of preparation among the students as many of the schools suggested, but a continued use of the local dialects.¹⁴³ Moreover, according to Christowe, Mikhailov had appointed many of the teachers and heads of the schools himself.¹⁴⁴

The parallel administration in Bulgarian Macedonia went beyond the school system. According to Christowe, “no one could hold a position with the official government in this territory unless he was *persona grata* to Imro.”¹⁴⁵ These positions included tax collectors, mayors and municipal clerks. Also, Mikhailov did not allow political campaigning in any part of Macedonia, especially from political parties outside the region, so that the people would not become divided over party lines.¹⁴⁶ All the while, Mikhailov was making sure that his control over Bulgarian Macedonia would serve the ultimate goal of the “advancement of Macedonianism and the national ideal”, which he considered a unified and autonomous Macedonia, whether or not the Macedonians were ethnically or racially Bulgarian.¹⁴⁷

While Mikhailov was in power, dissenters from the Organization began to form new groups. The major dissident group of the IMRO was the IMRO (United), whose members were considered “federalists”; pursuing an autonomous Macedonia in a Balkan federation of

¹⁴² Ibid., 228.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 228-9.

¹⁴⁴ Christowe, *Heroes*, 261.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 264.

communist states. But due to Mikhailov's rule over Bulgarian Macedonia, the IMRO (United) and other dissident organizations had to operate outside of Macedonia, and usually outside of Bulgaria altogether due to the outlawing of communism by King Boris. Despite the fact that dissident groups were forming, loyalty to Mikhailov in Pirin Macedonia was widespread among the population. Christowe sums up the sentiment among the population of Pirin like this: "As I write this I feel how powerless I am to convey even a fraction of all that which animates these Macedonians and of what it would mean to them if they awoke one morning and found themselves a free and self-governing people. I have a feeling that the Irish would understand this better than any other people."¹⁴⁸ So Mikhailov's views; that Macedonia as a whole should be autonomous, and the fact that his control over the entire district was done in pursuance of this goal, were completely in-line with the views of the majority of the people living under his control. Despite this, Mikhailov and the IMRO's "state within a state" would not last up to the outbreak of World War II.

The weak central government's toleration of the IMRO since the death of Prime Minister Stamboliiski in 1923 would change drastically in 1934. Seven years earlier a group of Bulgarian Military officers had organized a political organization called Zveno (the Link), which favored a republican form of government and had strong ties with the military. Although opposed by King Boris, Zveno's popularity began to steadily rise since its formation.¹⁴⁹ The members of Zveno were strong opponents of the IMRO and Mikhailov and wanted to establish central authority over the region of Pirin Macedonia as well as develop better ties with both Greece and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. On May 19, 1934, the Zveno group staged a bloodless *coups*, ousting the ruling party and gaining the King's acceptance despite his opposition to any form of republicanism.¹⁵⁰ It only took a matter of weeks after taking office for Zveno to virtually wipe out the IMRO from its stronghold in Pirin Macedonia and establish central state authority over the entire region. It was during these few

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴⁹ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 438.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 440.

weeks that the Bulgarization of the Macedonians in the easternmost part of Macedonia began.

As mentioned, many if not most of the Pirin Macedonians considered themselves Bulgarians. But as we have seen, what they meant by “Bulgarian” was something completely different than what was meant by the Bulgarian state. Even going back to the Balkan Wars, members of the IMRO operating in Bulgaria were “Macedonians first.”¹⁵¹ The IMRO, reflecting the sentiments of most of the Macedonian Slavs living in Bulgaria after the end of World War I, was able to maintain authority over the region not just administratively, but also in terms of national identity. As Christowe explains in his description of the IMRO in Macedonia, the organization was “founded for the sole and direct purpose of freeing Macedonia . . . but for the last fifteen years . . . it has had the more immediate and more compelling mission of saving the concept of the very existence of a Macedonia.”¹⁵² So from 1923 to 1934, the Bulgarian nation had rival “imagined communities” within its own borders. The Macedonians seemed to think of themselves as Bulgarians only in opposition to rival claims coming from Greece and Serbia, but in a Bulgarian state they were Macedonians.¹⁵³ With this parallel formation of identities, the Zveno government’s destruction of the IMRO and establishment of authority over Bulgaria’s Macedonian province can be seen as forced assimilation by the central state, similar to what had been occurring in neighboring Yugoslav Macedonia at the same time.

In May of 1934, the same month that the Zveno group came to power, the Ministries of War and Internal Affairs dispatched several units of soldiers and gendarmes to Pirin Macedonia in order to “dismantle [the IMRO], arrest its supporters and establish government control over the province.”¹⁵⁴ Stoyan Christowe, who had visited Bulgarian Macedonia in 1927, visited it once again in 1934, just after the government crackdown on the IMRO. He described the changes he witnessed vividly:

¹⁵¹ Wagner, *With the Victorious Bulgarians*, 227.

¹⁵² Christowe, *Heroes*, 43.

¹⁵³ Banac, *The National Question*, 327.

¹⁵⁴ Frusetta, *Bulgaria’s Macedonia*, 234.

In all the Macedonian towns and villages on my way to Sofia I witnessed scenes that reminded me of my Macedonia under Turkish rule. In the little squares and market-places the folk were assembled as for festivals. They were there to bid farewell to their priests, mayors, teachers, bankers, and other citizens going to banishment in remote places along the banks of the Danube and the Black sea coast.¹⁵⁵

All of these mayors, teachers and bankers were members of the IMRO, had close relations with the IMRO or had been appointed by the organization. And since the Zveno government had declared the IMRO illegal once it took office, it was legally able to rid the region of “Macedonists” and assert central control. According to Misha Glenny, Pirin Macedonia was “liberated from [IMRO] control and Sofia’s authority reestablished throughout the country.”¹⁵⁶ This statement, however, is misleading. Just as the Serbians had “liberated” the Macedonians in Vardar Macedonia during the Balkan Wars, the Bulgarian government had “liberated” a population that had its own vision of liberation, one that did not ask for the assertion of central authority and national consciousness from an outside power. And the Bulgarian government was indeed seen as an outside power in Pirin Macedonia at this time. According to Christowe, the government first disarmed the local population and then chased the IMRO out of Bulgaria entirely, and with this next step “the dictatorship actually confiscated the Imro state. It was then exactly like one country occupying another in time of war.”¹⁵⁷

While Christowe writes that what he witnessed reminded him of Macedonia under Turkish rule, the Bulgarian government’s seizure of control in Pirin is also reminiscent of the part of Macedonia under Serbian rule right across the border. Just as the French politician Henri Pozzi witnessed “all traces of Macedonism” having disappeared from Vardar Macedonia during the process of “Serbianization”, all traces of Macedonism in Pirin Macedonia were disappearing due to the Bulgarian government’s centralization campaign. According to Christowe, “The Macedonian brotherhoods, clubs, societies, institutions . . . were dissolved, and their newspapers, magazines, and other publications suspended. In other

¹⁵⁵ Christowe, *Heroes*, 279.

¹⁵⁶ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 440.

¹⁵⁷ Christowe, *Heroes*, 275-6.

words, the Macedonian movement for autonomy . . . had been arrested.”¹⁵⁸ From here on out, the Bulgarian government, even after the Zveno group itself was ousted, would continue undoing what the IMRO under both Todor Alexandrov and Ivan Mikhailov had created and maintained for over ten years. Christowe, witnessing the drastic changes occurring all over the region, claims that “the Macedonians laid all the stress on autonomism, and so the army was now herding them back into the national fold, herding them back, so to speak, under the standard of the horsetail.”¹⁵⁹ The “horsetail” is a reference to his brief history of the expansion of the Bulgarian Empire in the early middle ages earlier on in his report. Therefore, Christowe, himself Macedonian-born, shows us how the only autonomy that any piece of Macedonia had ever experienced up to this point ended with the expansion of the Bulgarian state. While Christowe confirms that the Slavs of Pirin Macedonia were considered Bulgarians, he clearly shows that they possessed a local identity that prevailed even after liberation from the Turks during the Balkan Wars. Therefore, it would not be a contradiction to label the Bulgarian government’s actions in Pirin Macedonia as “Bulgarization”; since the process firmly established a version of the Bulgarian national ideal centralized in Sofia, which did not reflect the actual sentiments of the local population in the region.

Unlike the Serbianization campaign in Vardar Macedonia, the Bulgarization of the Pirin Macedonians was largely successful. The IMRO was never able to establish itself in the region again, and its members had been either scattered all across Europe, gone into hiding, or had been arrested. Ivan Mikhailov himself had originally fled to Turkey during the crackdown, and then to Italy. He finally ended up in Croatia as a “guest of honor” to the Croatian fascist leader Ante Pavelic, where he spent the entirety of the Second World War trying to convince Nazi Germany to support an independent Macedonian State headed by himself. Moreover, the Bulgarian government was able to take over complete control of the process of identity development in the region. According to Frusetta, after the expulsion of the IMRO, the Bulgarian government would be able to seek new ways to establish a single,

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 281.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 280.

homogenous Bulgarian identity by shaping “the symbols and memories integral to local identity — and recast them in such fashion as to encourage a common Bulgarian national consciousness.”¹⁶⁰ Also unlike the Serbianization of neighboring Vardar Macedonia, the Macedonian identity of Pirin was allowed to continue, but only in a manner that the state could control and ensure that it complimented rather than severed itself from the Bulgarian national ideal. The success of this process can be seen by the fact that today nationalists in Pirin Macedonia, while often maintaining the label of Macedonian, in no way support or condone autonomy or separation from the Bulgarian nation or state. In other words, the Bulgarian central government took over Pirin Macedonia’s “Macedonianism” and forced it into the “imagined community”.

¹⁶⁰ Frusetta, *Bulgaria’s Macedonia*, 237.

CHAPTER 5

BULGARIZATION PT. 2 – VARDAR MACEDONIA

I had yet to learn that the opera bouffe of the Balkans is written in blood and that those who are dead when the curtain falls, never come to life again.

--Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle*

At the start of World War II, the scene in Yugoslav Macedonia was hardly different than it was at the end of the Second Balkan War. Then, in 1914, the *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars* described in detail the Serbianization campaign taking place against the will of the Macedonian Slavs. In 1939 not much had changed. Milovan Djilas, a Montenegrin and a leading member of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), was dispatched to Macedonia in the summer of 1939 to help organize a local committee there. What he saw upon his arrival pained him, and initially led him to despair before getting to work on Party business. He reported that:

In Serbia, in Croatia, and particularly in Slovenia, one felt free in comparison with Macedonia. Dull silence prevailed in cafes and in the street, augmented further by fearful scenes of misery and backwardness. Gendarmes paraded in public places – on trains, at markets, and on the main streets. People were afraid to speak their own language; they were instructed to add the Serbian ending of “ic” to their names.¹⁶¹

In the northwestern part of Macedonia there is a sarcastic saying for when someone is moving slowly: “Čekas za Bugarija?” (Are you waiting for Bulgaria?) The hardships endured by the Macedonian Slavs during the interwar period had led them to hope that someone would liberate them, but for three decades no one had come to their aid. Many Macedonians were even beginning to claim that life under Islamic rule during the height of the Ottoman Empire was preferable to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. As Stoyan Christowe put it: “at least under the Turk Macedonia existed as a geographical unit, and the inhabitants enjoyed certain

¹⁶¹ Milovan Djilas, *Memoir of a Revolutionary*, trans. Drenka Willen (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 291.

national rights.”¹⁶² Given Bulgaria’s close historical ties with the Macedonians, Bulgaria was the most likely neighboring country to be seen as a potential liberator. Bulgaria’s liberation of Macedonia would have to be done carefully however; occupation by or annexation to Bulgaria by the outbreak of war was not as popular of an idea as might be expected. While the Macedonians had been living under a regime they considered oppressive for the last three decades, more and more people were becoming fed up with the question of their nationality within a Serbian-Bulgarian framework.¹⁶³ A *National Geographic* article from as early as 1917 quoted a woman who told the reporters when they asked what her nationality was that she was “neither Bulgar, nor Serb . . . I am Macedonian only and I’m sick of war.”¹⁶⁴ A man the British journalist Rebecca West encountered in central Macedonia expressed to her: “it is time we stopped thinking of such little things as whether we are Serbs or Bulgars. I believe we should rather realize . . . that we are all human beings and that every human being needs freedom and justice as much as he needs air to breathe.”¹⁶⁵

On top of the growing number of Macedonians straying away from pro-Bulgarian feelings, several sources from before the war indicate that the majority of Macedonians favored autonomy and independence in one form or another over incorporation into a “Greater Bulgaria”. As explained in the last chapter, the part of Macedonia already “liberated” by Bulgaria was considered occupied territory, even by Macedonians who felt that they were of Bulgarian origin. Unlike the Macedonians in Bulgarian-Macedonia described by Christowe, however, the Macedonians under Yugoslav rule had never lived as a part of the Bulgarian state. Even though they would have viewed life under Bulgarian rule as more favorable than that of Yugoslav or Serbian rule, the British vice-consul in Skopje reported in 1940 that the majority of Macedonians in the Kingdom were in favor of autonomy.¹⁶⁶ Despite the prevalence of these sentiments, there was virtually no organization

¹⁶² Christowe, *Heroes*, 127.

¹⁶³ Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 159.

¹⁶⁴ Herbet Corey “On the Monastir Road”, *National Geographic*, May 1917, 388.

¹⁶⁵ West, *Black Lamb*, 798.

¹⁶⁶ Marshall Lee Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 243.

and “Macedonian nationalism was elusive.”¹⁶⁷ The push for Macedonian autonomy at this time was nowhere near as strong and well organized as it was at the end of the 19th century, but the conditions in Yugoslav Macedonia for its annexation to Bulgaria were not as smooth as Tsar Boris had anticipated.

Bulgaria, before entering the war, was torn between opposing sides. It is said that Tsar Boris often complained that his wife was pro-Italian, his government pro-German and his people pro-Russian. He himself, he believed, seemed to be the only one that was pro-Bulgarian.¹⁶⁸ Despite the mixed feelings prevalent in Bulgaria at the time, Boris, with the approval of Parliament, signed the Tripartite Pact with Germany on March 1, 1941. Although Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop threatened Bulgaria with invasion if Boris did not sign the pact, the Tsar and hard-line members of Parliament had hoped that by signing it they would be able to regain “lost” territory, especially the regions of Vardar and Aegean Macedonia.¹⁶⁹ At the same time however, Boris hoped to keep Bulgaria out of the fighting, and, after Operation Barbarossa and the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, especially on the Eastern Front.

Shortly after Bulgaria signed the Tripartite Pact with Nazi Germany, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia did likewise, presenting problems for Axis-allied Bulgaria since much of its irredentist aspirations lay within Yugoslavia’s borders. However, immediately after the Kingdom of Yugoslavia signed the Tripartite Pact, mass demonstrations, particularly in Serbia, called for its immediate revocation. Students went to the streets and shouted the slogan “better the grave than a slave!”¹⁷⁰ Only two days after Prince Paul signed the pact for Yugoslavia, the Serbian General Dushan Simovich led a successful *coups* against the King and the existing government on March 27, 1941. In response to the *coups*, Hitler planned the invasion of Yugoslavia and on April 6, German planes began bombing Belgrade. The Royal Yugoslav Army, much to the surprise of the world, including Nazi Germany, surrendered in

¹⁶⁷ Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder: The Second World War in Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 238.

¹⁶⁸ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 1-3.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁷⁰ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 474.

less than two weeks. Four years of genocide, famine and strife would follow and the road for Bulgaria's annexation of most of Macedonia was opened, along with the forced national assimilation of the Slavs in Yugoslav Macedonia, "blood brothers" from whom they had been separated for over 70 years.

The Bulgarian 5th Army entered Macedonia on April 19, 1941 to a population with mixed feelings. While the Italians, through the fascist puppet-state of Albania, occupied the westernmost parts of Macedonia, the Bulgarians annexed the bulk of the territory from Skopje to the Aegean Sea. With great enthusiasm, a large portion of the Slavic population initially welcomed the Bulgarian forces as liberators. Crowds gathered in the streets of Skopje to welcome them, some with signs reading: "One people, one Tsar, one kingdom."¹⁷¹ For those Macedonians with pro-Bulgarian leanings, the Bulgaria of San Stefano was finally realized. For the average Macedonian Slav, the long wait for deliverance from Serbian oppression was finally over. There was, however, some protest. For example, in the eastern city of Strumica, only three days after the Bulgarian Army entered Macedonia demonstrations against the occupation broke out, and they were brutally quelled by the Bulgarian police.¹⁷² Despite this, the majority of Macedonian Slavs welcomed the Bulgarians; their arrival signified the end of Serbianization. What the Slavs greeting the Bulgarian occupation forces as liberators did not realize, was that all they had done is substitute Serbianization for Bulgarization. As one Macedonian from Skopje would later explain: "Of course we cheered; we had no way of knowing then that the Bulgarians would just repeat all the mistakes the Serbs had made."¹⁷³ Shortly after the entrance of Bulgarian troops on April 19, the same process of forced assimilation, nationalization and Bulgarization that had occurred seven years earlier in Pirin Macedonia would begin in Vardar and Aegean Macedonia, only this time it would be far bloodier.

Despite the lack of success of Serbia's forced assimilation campaign, parts of Macedonia, especially in the north around the city of Skopje, included populations who

¹⁷¹ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 123.

¹⁷² Boro Mitrovski, Venceslav Glisic and Tomo Ristovski, *Bugarska Vojska U Jugoslaviji: 1941-1945*, trans. Kordija Kveder (Belgrade: Medjunarodna Politika, 1971), 77.

¹⁷³ Quoted in Miller, *Bulgaria*, 123.

possessed a Serbian identity. Part of this was due to the fact that after the First World War thousands of Serbian and Montenegrin settlers were brought into Macedonia, often occupying vacant property left behind by Bulgarians. Aside from this, since the 19th century, when propaganda wars were being fought between Bulgarian and Serbian churches and schools, significant numbers of Macedonians adopted a Serbian consciousness. Rebecca West, like many of her countrymen and women in the 19th and early 20th centuries, visited the Balkans and described in vivid detail her experiences. In 1937, she and her husband visited Yugoslav Macedonia. She first traveled to Skopje, the capital, and later to the lakeside town of Ohrid as well as several other towns along the way. Although she sometimes referred to the Slavs in the region as Macedonians, she also reported that there were rival identities, some of them Bulgarian, some of them Serbian. In the south of Macedonia she came across more people who considered themselves Bulgarians, while in the north around the Skopje region she encountered several villages that were “fanatically pro-Serb.”¹⁷⁴ West’s description of these pro-Serb villages does not make it clear whether or not the villagers had taken on a Serbian identity out of fear or if their feelings were genuine. Despite the lack of clarity, she claimed that surrounding these villages were ones that were “Bulgarian in feeling”.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, it seems safe to assume that at least some of the villages genuinely felt themselves to be closer to Serbia than to Bulgaria. Whatever their true reasons for possessing a Serbian consciousness, these people would be the first victims of Axis-allied Bulgaria’s “Bulgarization” of Vardar Macedonia in 1941.

According to a western report published during the war titled “The Situation in Yugoslavia” (1943), “Bulgaria’s occupation of Macedonia was accompanied by a massacre of the Serbs.”¹⁷⁶ Both Bulgarian regular troops and ex-members of the IMRO who returned from exile after the Nazi invasion perpetrated atrocities against the Serbian population.¹⁷⁷ According to the same report, out of a total population of 25,000 Serbs in the city of Skopje,

¹⁷⁴ West, *Black Lamb*, 675.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ D.K., “The Situation in Yugoslavia: I. Administration under Axis Occupation,” *Bulletin of International News* 20, no.25 (Dec., 1943): 1077.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

only between 1,000 and 2,000 remained in the winter of 1942.¹⁷⁸ The Serbian victims of Bulgarian occupation included both the Serbs from Serbia proper who had settled in Macedonia or had taken positions of office, and pro-Serbian Macedonians in the villages and cities. Those Serbian officials and settlers who remained after the invasion were expelled,¹⁷⁹ while pro-Serbian Macedonians were either arrested and sent to concentration camps in Bulgaria proper or tortured and executed. Some suspected Serb-sympathizers were tortured by the Bulgarian police and then had their mutilated bodies hung on street lamps in the cities.¹⁸⁰ Irene Grunbaum, a German-Jewish woman who married a Serbian Jew before the war, escaped with her husband from Belgrade to Skopje in 1942. In her memoir, she wrote that in Skopje “most of the time police officers were in civilian clothes and went into this or that house, making arrests among the pro-Serbian populace.” Some of those who were arrested, she explained, were sentenced to forced labor.¹⁸¹

The Serbs who were persecuted were not considered part of the Bulgarian *narod* (nation): they were considered “intruders”¹⁸² and thus the assimilation tactics used on the rest of the Macedonian Slavs did not apply to them. Bulgarian citizenship during the first two years of occupation was only given to those people believed to be “of Bulgarian descent.”¹⁸³ But the Serbs were not the only Macedonians who were treated as intruders. In the “newly liberated territories” occupied by Bulgaria that were believed to belong historically, racially and culturally to the Bulgarian nation, about 14,000 of the inhabitants were Jews. The overwhelming majority of the Jews in these territories were descendents of Sephardim who had been taken in by the Ottoman Empire after their expulsion from Spain. Therefore, the Macedonian Jews had been present in the cities of Skopje, Bitola and Shtip since 1492, and

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 165.

¹⁸⁰ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 486.

¹⁸¹ Irene Grunbaum, *Escape Through the Balkans*, Trans. Katherine Morris (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 14-15.

¹⁸² Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 219.

¹⁸³ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 125.

they were considered by many of the Christians and Muslims alike to be “natives”.¹⁸⁴ While racial anti-Semitism was not widespread in Bulgaria, by the end of March, 1943, almost all of Vardar Macedonia’s Jewish population had been deported by the Bulgarian occupation forces and sent to Treblinka. According to some estimates, a total of 7,250 Macedonian Jews were executed there.¹⁸⁵

Bulgaria’s deportation of the Macedonian Jews in the context of forced-national assimilation is extremely complicated. By the end of the war, Bulgaria managed to avoid the deportation of its own Jews, while dooming the majority of the Jewish population in occupied territories. Also, the Bulgarians, lacking widespread popular anti-Semitism, were constantly harassed and pressed by the Germans to carry out the deportations. The question then becomes; was the deportation of the Jews in Macedonia part of a process of ethnic cleansing in order to “Bulgarize” the region, or was it simply because of the political circumstances in Bulgaria at the time? Tzvetan Todorov and Frederick Chary offer some great insight into the question of why Bulgaria’s Jews were saved while Macedonia’s were doomed by the same administration. The traditional approach is that the Jews of Macedonia and Thrace were sacrificed so that the Jews of Bulgaria could be saved. Tzvetan Todorov takes this approach and argues that Dimitur Peshev, the vice-president of the Bulgarian Parliament and a Philo-Semite, and the Bulgarian people themselves, were responsible for the halting of deportations in Bulgaria proper.¹⁸⁶ According to him, once the deportations of the Jews in Macedonia and Thrace began, Peshev was given time to influence the halt of deportations in Bulgaria. Todorov also claims that Bulgarians, by nature, are tolerant people due to their experience of living as oppressed subjects under the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, once the Bulgarian people heard of the deportation of Jews in Macedonia, they stood united in their efforts against such events occurring in their own country. Frederick Chary, on the other hand, argues that the Bulgarian population was actually divided over the

¹⁸⁴ Morris, introduction to *Escape From the Balkans*, xii.

¹⁸⁵ Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 83.

¹⁸⁶ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fragility of Goodness: Why Bulgaria’s Jews Survived the Holocaust* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 30.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

issue. Furthermore, it meant little if the majority of Bulgarian citizens were against deportation, since “political organizations which did defend the Jews had little influence with the government even if they had support from the public.”¹⁸⁸

I would argue that while Todorov is correct in his assertion that the majority of Bulgarians, lacking anti-Semitic sentiments, and Peshev, holding the power to intervene, were partly responsible for the saving of Bulgaria’s Jews, neither of these facts applied to the Jews of Macedonia. The deportation of Jews from Macedonia was not merely due to Nazi intervention in Bulgarian politics, nor was it simply a way for the Bulgarians to save their own Jews. According to Marshal Lee Miller, “Macedonia was an ethnic patchwork, with many inhabitants who did not regard themselves as Bulgarians; as a result, the occupiers made energetic efforts to “Bulgarize” them.” He then goes on to make the claim that in areas such as Greece, where large parts of the population were non-Slavic speakers, Bulgarization meant massacre and expulsion.¹⁸⁹ There is no reason to believe that while Serbs and Greeks, who were not considered members of the Bulgarian nation, were executed or forced to leave Bulgarian territory, that it would be any different for the Jews. Furthermore, both the Prime-Minister of Bulgaria and the Minister of Internal Affairs were fascists and anti-Semites, as was Alexander Belev, chief of the Commissariat for Jewish Questions who ordered the deportations. While their views on Jews and the deportations in general may not be typical of the whole population of Bulgaria, their assimilative policies in Macedonia met little resistance in Bulgaria proper aside from the communists. According to Misha Glenny, while the Bulgarians in Bulgaria protested against the deportation of their own Jews, no one protested against the deportations in Macedonia and Thrace,¹⁹⁰ even though it was by no means a secret.¹⁹¹ Also, accounts of the rounding up of Macedonia’s Jews by Bulgarian troops reveals that they acted cruelly toward them, beating the men, women and children,

¹⁸⁸ Frederick Chary, *Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution, 1940-1944* (Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1972), 192.

¹⁸⁹ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 122.

¹⁹⁰ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 510.

¹⁹¹ Todorov, *Fragility*, 30.

stealing from them and even cases of committing rape.¹⁹² Therefore, it appears evident that at least part of the reason for the successful deportation of Macedonia's Jews was because the Bulgarization of Macedonia required a form of "ethnic-cleansing" with which may be included the treatment of the Serbs and Greeks in Bulgarian-occupied territory.

Unlike the Serbs, Greeks, and Jews in Bulgarian-occupied Macedonia, the average Macedonian Slav did not face expulsion or execution. They were instead faced with an almost identical process of forced nationalization to the one they had already experienced under Serbian domination. Even before the Bulgarians entered Macedonia in late April, the Macedonians were getting a taste of what was to come. Émigrés from Bulgaria entered Macedonia with the Nazi invasion and set up the so-called "Action Committees", which were made up of different organizations whose purpose was to prepare Macedonia for its annexation to Bulgaria. While these committees were made up of people who had origins in Macedonia, and claimed to represent the will of the Macedonian population, they were seen by many of the local inhabitants as outsiders, since "even the returning Macedonian exiles seemed strangers" to them.¹⁹³ These émigrés had not experienced life under forced assimilation by the Serbs and did not share the majority of the population's sentiment, especially on the sensitive issues of independence and autonomy. A letter to the Macedonian people by one of the leaders of the Bulgarian Action Committees, Vassil Hadzikimov, published in a Macedonian newspaper, shows how detached from reality these returnees often were:

Let's never forget, that Macedonia is in the Bulgarian state, that it is a part of Great Bulgaria, and that all those ideological questions about the forms of our liberation, accompanied by a lot of tactics and combinations for autonomy, federation, Macedonian nation, etc., being significant during the times of oppression, are pointless now.¹⁹⁴

Despite the unfamiliarity of these returning émigrés, at least they were Macedonians. By early July, however, the newly appointed district governor from Bulgaria ordered the

¹⁹² Glenny, *The Balkans*, 508.

¹⁹³ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 123.

¹⁹⁴ Vassil Hadzhikimov, "Towards Unanimity and Creativity," *Macedonia*, no. 2, May 1941, given in *Bulgarian Campaign Committees in Macedonia, 1941*, ed. Dimitre Minchev [book on-line] (Sofia: Makedonski Naucen Inst., 1995, accessed 3 July 2012); available from http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/bugarash/bccc_1941/index.html; Internet.

dissolution of the Action Committees and the replacement of their leaders with officials appointed by Sofia. For those Macedonians with strong Bulgarian leanings, this act alone led to disappointment and disillusionment.¹⁹⁵ According to Stevan K. Pavlowitch, these returnees were “the first to feel frustrated” and would soon find allies among other groups frustrated by the occupation, including communists.¹⁹⁶

According to James Frusetta, what replaced the Bulgarian Action Committees was the same form of centralization that had occurred in Pirin Macedonia in 1934.¹⁹⁷ The centralization of rule from Sofia, in turn, is what prompted the forced assimilation of the Macedonians. Pavlowitch states that the Macedonians cooled to the Bulgarian regime once they were “incorporated into Bulgaria’s war machine” through forced conscription and rationing.¹⁹⁸ Macedonians were indeed conscripted into the Bulgarian Army by September 1941; however, “The Situation in Yugoslavia” reports that sabotage of the Bulgarian regime was first reported earlier in August, one month before the draft.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, it would seem that the Bulgarization of the Macedonians went beyond the war effort. Reminiscent of the days of Serbianization, Macedonians had to deal with the expansion and centralization of education from Sofia, the appointment of officials, administrators and priests from Bulgaria rather than locals, disrespectful and exploitive soldiers, and most importantly, harsh punishment for not accepting Bulgarian nationality.

As always seems to be the case with the forced nationalization of a certain population, education was used as a propaganda tool. According to Marshall Lee Miller, while execution and expulsion were the main factors of Bulgarization for Greeks and Serbs, propaganda, mainly through the schools, was the major factor of Bulgarization for the Macedonians.²⁰⁰ Vassil Hadzhikimov told the people of Skopje that young people’s “lack of knowledge about our culture and history has to be amended as soon as possible. The

¹⁹⁵ Frusetta, *Bulgaria’s Macedonia*, 252.

¹⁹⁶ Pavlowitch, *Hitler’s New Disorder*, 101.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁹⁹ D.K., “The Situation in Yugoslavia”, 1077.

²⁰⁰ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 122, 124.

universities, the schools and other educational institutions will fill this gap [sic].”²⁰¹ Although the Bulgarian Action Committees were disbanded only two months after the above address, the Bulgarian government in Sofia adopted this policy as well. Bogdan Filov, the fascist Prime Minister of Bulgaria and a staunch supporter of Boris’ signing of the Tripartite Pact in order to “re-gain” Macedonia, was also the Minister for Education. On top of this, teachers were imported from Bulgaria proper, replacing the Serbian teachers and leaving no room for Macedonian ones. For those few Macedonian teachers who were deemed suitable, indoctrination was required during which they would be sent to Sofia for a year.²⁰²

According to one post-war Yugoslav source, proper Bulgarian and Bulgarian history were the “principle subjects” taught in all the schools across Macedonia.²⁰³ Although post-war communist sources should be dealt with cautiously, several western scholars agree with the above statement. Miller similarly asserts that “the new curriculum in the Macedonian schools strongly emphasized Bulgarian topics and discouraged the use of the Macedonian language, which the Bulgarian authorities regarded, rightly or wrongly, as only a dialect of Bulgarian.”²⁰⁴ In a typical school week under Bulgarian occupation the required curriculum included seven hours of proper Bulgarian, three hours of history of the Bulgarian nation and at least one hour of history of the Bulgarian Orthodox church, compared to only three hours for mathematics.²⁰⁵

Teachers were not the only people brought in from Bulgaria proper. Virtually all official positions were filled with people imported from Bulgaria, and bad ones at that. According to Jozo Tomasevich “without making any formal proclamation, [Sofia] simply extended Bulgarian military, administrative, police, and judicial organizations and legislation” to Macedonia.²⁰⁶ Some of the positions included district heads, regional

²⁰¹ Hadzhikimov, “Towards Unanimity,” *Bulgarian Campaign Committees*, http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/bugarash/bccc_1941/index.html.

²⁰² Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 164.

²⁰³ Mitrovski, *Bugarska Vojska*, 42-3.

²⁰⁴ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 124.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 161.

directors, administrative employees and even village chiefs.²⁰⁷ Serbian priests, who had themselves replaced Bulgarian priests after the Balkan Wars, were in-turn replaced by Bulgarians. The metropolitan of Skopje, Josif Cvijovic, and all priests accused of being Serbs or Serb-sympathizers, were expelled from Macedonia and replaced by Bulgarian clergy. All the Macedonian church bishoprics were also annexed to the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.²⁰⁸ It is no wonder that many Macedonians, already traumatized from what they had seen in 1913, “saw no difference between the wartime Bulgarian regime and the interwar Yugoslav . . . government.”²⁰⁹ To make matters worse, most of the state employees and officials sent to Macedonia from Bulgaria were “castoffs”, since Macedonia’s conditions at the time made it an undesirable place to take office.²¹⁰ Even though the new officials from Bulgaria were hardly Sofia’s best, they were often suspicious of the Macedonians and discriminated against them in terms of employment and considered them “second-class Bulgarians.”²¹¹ Soldiers from Bulgaria also acted arrogantly toward the Macedonians. While Macedonian men were conscripted into the Bulgarian Army, the soldiers from Bulgaria proper acted like conquerors rather than liberators. According to “The Situation in Yugoslavia”, “complaints about the behavior of Bulgarian troops in the autumn of 1941 resulted in a Commissioner being sent to tour the occupied regions.”²¹² All of these actions combined, well before the tide of war turned in favor of the allies, had been “met with increasing hostility by the local population.”²¹³

Another important factor in Bulgaria’s forced nationalization of Macedonia, and perhaps the most sensitive one, was the way in which the regime dealt with the issue of the uniqueness of Macedonia and the Macedonians. We have already seen how the regime attempted to instill in young people the idea that they were Bulgarians through the teaching

²⁰⁷ Mitrovski, *Bugarska Vojska*, 40.

²⁰⁸ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 164.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

²¹⁰ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 123.

²¹¹ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 164.

²¹² D.K., “The Situation in Yugoslavia”, 1077.

²¹³ Frusetta, *Bulgaria’s Macedonia*, 252.

of proper Bulgarian language and history. Already in the schools, the Bulgarians were trying to show that Macedonia's revolutionary heritage, which was largely a struggle for Macedonian autonomy, was the struggle of the entire Bulgarian nation.²¹⁴ On top of this, the Bulgarian authorities "rejected all claims to Macedonian uniqueness" and treated the Macedonians as if they were merely "backward Bulgarians".²¹⁵ There are also some reports that people were not allowed to call themselves Macedonians, lest they be severely punished. As early as June 1941, a proclamation of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia published "Macedonian People on Alert", in which claims were made that give some insight into how the Bulgarians dealt with Macedonians who considered themselves as such. According to the Proclamation, "the Macedonians are forbidden to call themselves Macedonians. Macedonian culture and the 50-year struggle for Macedonian freedom and equality . . . is being presented as Bulgarian and not Macedonian."²¹⁶ The Proclamation goes on to claim that "many Macedonians are being interrogated by the police. Some have been beaten for no other reason than for calling themselves Macedonians."²¹⁷ Many scholars today would be cautious of trusting such claims, since it could easily be communist propaganda. But even if it is merely propaganda, the Proclamation's text is revealing. If the Proclamation's goal was to appeal to the Macedonians in order to get more members for the Party and resist the occupation, then by claiming that Bulgarians were punishing people for calling themselves Macedonians, we are shown how sensitive the topic was for many Macedonians. Even if Bulgarian police were not beating people for calling themselves Macedonians, we have already seen how the regime denied them their uniqueness as a people. Whatever the truth behind the Communist Party of Macedonia's claim, it seems to have been able to appeal to a large portion of the population.

²¹⁴ Mitrovski, *Bugarska Vojska*, 42.

²¹⁵ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 124.

²¹⁶ Proclamation of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia, "Macedonian People on Alert!" given in *Makedonija niz Vekovite*, ed. Zoran Todorovski (Skopje: Drzaven Arhiv na Republika Makedonija, 2001), 63.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

According to “The Situation in Yugoslavia”, resistance against the Bulgarian occupation was first reported in August of 1941 and had been continuing up to the date that it was published in 1943.²¹⁸ In 1942 and 1943, the IMRO still had a large amount of support among most of the Macedonian Slavs. By this time the organization was extremely anti-Bulgarian and, as we have seen, its leader Ivan Mikhailov was trying to get German support for a Pro-Nazi independent state of Macedonia.²¹⁹ However, Mikhailov was exiled in Croatia and was unable to organize any serious form of resistance against the Bulgarian regime. While some Serbian “Chetniks”, loyal to the Yugoslav government in exile, were operating in northern Macedonia, the bulk of resistance came from the communists. The communists, both the Bulgarian BCP and Yugoslav CPY, were the most organized and had the clearest objectives. In Moscow, in 1934, the Comintern addressed the question of a separate Macedonian nation, raised by Dimitar Vlahov, a chief of the IMRO (United), sometime before. At that meeting it was agreed that such a nation exists and would be recognized by the Soviet Union and the Comintern.²²⁰

Although communist resistance to the Bulgarians and Germans in Macedonia began as early as October 1941, in response to the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, the communists in Macedonia would lack sufficient leadership for over a year. The problem in the leadership of the movement was due to bickering between the BCP and the CPY, both of whom considered Macedonia to be rightfully theirs. Initially, the Party in Macedonia was led by Metodi Shatorov-Sharlo, who considered himself a Bulgarian and was apprehensive in attacking the Bulgarian occupiers while attempting to incorporate the Communist Party of Macedonia into the BCP. Josip Broz Tito, the leader of the CPY, replaced Sharlo with Lazar Kolarov in August of 1941. Unlike Sharlo, Kolarov was Pro-Yugoslav and immediately ordered Macedonian Partisans to attack the Bulgarian occupation forces. Though Kolarov was arrested after an encounter with the Bulgarian Army on October 11, 1941, the Comintern’s favor went with Tito, who condemned both autonomist and Pro-

²¹⁸ D.K., “The Situation in Yugoslavia,” 1077.

²¹⁹ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 163.

²²⁰ Banac, *The National Question*, 328.

Bulgarian communists in Macedonia. For Tito, Macedonia's future lay in a communist Yugoslav Federation as a constituent republic. Tito seems to have appealed to most Macedonian communists by 1943, when his popularity had grown due to several successful battles throughout Yugoslavia.²²¹ Aside from his success in armed resistance against the Germans and their allies, Tito appealed directly to the Macedonians by recognizing them as a distinct nation and offering them the freedom to develop their national identity. While it has been argued that Tito's true purpose for recognizing a distinct Macedonian nation was in order to justify Yugoslav claims on the regions of Macedonia that belonged to Bulgaria and Greece, James Frusetta argues otherwise. According to him, recognizing the existence of a separate Macedonian nationality was the only way Tito could have secured loyalty for a Yugoslav regime based out of Belgrade, which most Macedonians had little trust in.²²² If this was indeed his tactic, it worked. The idea of a sovereign Macedonian republic in a Yugoslav federation had gained widespread popularity throughout Macedonia, even if it was ruled from Belgrade, and by 1944, more and more Macedonians were joining the Yugoslav Partisans, especially deserters from the Bulgarian Army who had been drafted earlier.²²³

Tsar Boris III of Bulgaria died unexpectedly on August 28, 1943. The rumor was that he had been poisoned by the Nazis.²²⁴ From 1941 until his death, Boris had succeeded in keeping Bulgaria out of the fighting on the Eastern Front, and thus no declaration of war between Bulgaria and the Soviet Union had taken place. As Soviet troops neared the Romanian-Bulgarian border on September 5, 1944, however, the Soviet Union declared war on Bulgaria. The Red Army crossed the Bulgarian border on September 8, 1944 to no resistance. Bulgarian soldiers were ordered not to fight the Soviet troops, but they would have likely disobeyed orders to attack the Red Army anyways.²²⁵ A communist *coups* led by the Fatherland Front against the government immediately took place, signifying the end of Bulgaria's alliance with the Nazis, and of the forced Bulgarization of Macedonia. While

²²¹ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 132-3.

²²² Frusetta, *Bulgaria's Macedonia*, 262.

²²³ Pavlowitch, *Hitler's New Disorder*, 239.

²²⁴ Miller, *Bulgaria*, 138.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 215.

Bulgarian troops of the new Fatherland Front regime had remained in Macedonia to help Tito's forces fight off the Germans withdrawing from Greece, at the end of the war Vardar Macedonia became a republic in the Yugoslav Federation along with Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Slovenia and Montenegro. Although Pirin and Aegean Macedonia remained within the borders of Bulgaria and Greece respectively, for the first time in history, Yugoslav Macedonia was given the freedom to express its nationality, albeit within a socialist-Yugoslav context. The Bulgarization of Macedonia, like the Serbianization of the region, had failed. The success of the Yugoslav version of a socialist republic of Macedonia was no doubt due, at least in part, to the will of the Macedonians. As Jozo Tomasevich argues, if the Bulgarian occupation had "developed in the Macedonians a sense of cultural unity with Bulgaria and a feeling that they were part of the Bulgarian nation, then the Communist party of Yugoslavia . . . which advocated a separate Macedonian republic in a federal Yugoslav state, would not have had the success it did."²²⁶

The end of Serbianization and Bulgarization in Macedonia was not a happy ending for all of the Macedonians. Those Macedonians who did not fully support Macedonia's status in the Yugoslav Federation were harshly persecuted by the new communist authorities. Metodi Andonov-Cento, the President of the Anti-Fascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM), which governed Macedonia from 1944 until the end of the war, was removed from office for promoting further autonomy for Macedonia. In 1946 he was arrested by the communist authorities for his views and sentenced to 11 years in prison. Due to medical negligence in prison, he died in 1957. Those Macedonian communists who had retained their pro-Bulgarian sympathies, imprisonment and even execution awaited them after 1945.²²⁷ A separate study would be required to determine how severe the process of forced "Yugoslavization" in Macedonia truly was, but the pattern is evident. Those Macedonians wanting greater autonomy and independence for Macedonia, a struggle dating back to the 1890s, would have to wait until September 8, 1991, when Vardar Macedonia

²²⁶ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 165.

²²⁷ Hugh Poulton, *Who Are The Macedonians?* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 118.

peacefully declared independence from Yugoslavia. Bulgaria was the first country in the world to recognize the “Republic of Macedonia”.

CHAPTER 6

FRATRICIDE - ASSIMILATION AND EXTERMINATION IN THE NDH

From under his blood-stained shirt protruded a crucifix, and a black and white medal ribbon, probably the Iron Cross, still hung to the shreds of his German-type tunic. Fighting for an alien power against his own countrymen, he had destroyed himself rather than fall into the hands of men of the same race . . . but of different beliefs, beliefs to which they held as savagely as he held to his, for which they would kill and be killed as readily as he for his. There could have been no better symbol of the violence and fanaticism of this Balkan war.

--Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*

With their black tunics and caps decorated with the letter “U”, armed with knives called “srbosjeks” (Serb-cutters) and large sledgehammers used for killing civilians, the “Ustashi” were the militia of the fascist Independent State of Croatia (NDH) as well as the party in control of the regime, and throughout World War II, they were feared by many civilians even more than the Germans. The NDH was created after the invasion of Yugoslavia by Nazi Germany in early April 1941 and lasted until May 1945. During that span of time it is estimated that between 20,000 and 31,000 of the NDH’s 40,000 Jews were killed²²⁸, while between 300,000 and 600,000 Serbs, who made up about 30% of Croatia’s population, were also killed.²²⁹ The main group responsible for these deaths is the Ustashi, both the party and their militias. The large number of Serbs killed by the regime reflects the official policy of the NDH under Ustashi control: that “a third of the two million Serbs in the NDH would be expelled; a third would be assimilated through conversion from Orthodoxy to Catholicism; and a third would be killed.”²³⁰ According to Misha Glenny however, the NDH

²²⁸Glenny, *The Balkans*, 500.

²²⁹ Howard Ball, *Genocide: a reference handbook* (Santa Barbra: ABC-CLIO, 2011), 124.

²³⁰ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 498.

came across considerable problems identifying and singling out the Serbs since “they were racially indistinguishable.”²³¹ The above quote by Fitzroy Maclean, who spent part of the war in Yugoslavia, reflects Glenny’s claim; it was believed by most people, including the Serbs and Croats themselves, that the two were members of the same race. The dialects spoken by the Serbs and Croats were almost identical, though there were several regional variances. The main differences between the two groups, therefore, are rooted in religion and history. Ever since the East-West Schism the Serbs have remained Orthodox while the Croats remain Catholic. Furthermore, while the Serbs lived for centuries under Ottoman rule, the Croats lived under the Austro-Hungarian Empire for much of their modern history. Despite these small differences, few would have regarded the Croats and Serbs to be different “racially” in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In fact, as we shall see, a large part of Croatia’s national awakening in the 19th century was based on claims of racial and linguistic similarity with the Serbs.

Therefore, it would seem, we are left with an exception to the main argument of this thesis. If the Serbs and Bulgarians used claims based on racial and linguistic principles to force the Slavs of Macedonia to assimilate, then why did the Croats of the NDH, whose nationalism was based on similar principles, revert to extermination and expulsion at the same time the Bulgarians were “Bulgarianizing” Macedonia? Although the NDH’s treatment of its Serbian minority does indeed complicate this matter, it also exposes another side of the outcome of nationalist claims on populations. While the foundations of nationality, combing race, language, culture, and history can be used as inclusive tools in the nation-building process, though often requiring force, they can also be used as exclusive methods for creating nation-states. The rhetoric of certain Croatian nationalists and members of the Ustashi party, as we shall see, set the stage for an exclusive policy of nation building in Croatia between 1941 and 1945 in which Serbs were the main target. Both the Serbs’ and Bulgarians’ nationalist programs advocated that the Slavs of Macedonia belonged to their respective nations. The Ustashi Croats, however, claimed that the Serbs in the lands they controlled were outside of their national group, the purpose being to completely eradicate the Serbian

²³¹ Ibid., 499.

element in Croatia rather than assimilate them by force into their national “imagined community”.

As with most of Europe, the rise of nationalism in Croatia began in the early 19th century, when it was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire under direct control of the Kingdom of Hungary. The man to whom most scholars attribute the beginning of Croatian nationalism is Ljudevit Gaj (1809-1872), the founder of the “Illyrian Movement”, which, some scholars claim, is synonymous with the Croatian national awakening.²³² Gaj, himself a second generation Croat born to German-speaking parents, tended to define the Croats and Serbs both as cultural groups rather than political ones. While laying the groundwork for the rise of Croatian nationalism, mostly through his various attempts at unifying the language of the South Slavs, he followed a tradition of thought that had existed among Croatian intellectuals since the Renaissance; Serbs, Croats and all other South Slavs, including Bulgarians, were all different branches of a single Slavic, or “Illyrian” race. Gaj argued that there was a single, racial-linguistic group; the Slavs, and the race was divided up into four different sub-groups; Russians, Czechoslovaks, Poles and “Illyrians” or Yugoslavs. According to him, “The Croatian tribe . . . is of the Slavic family. In her are its origin, its growth, its limits. Its customs are Slavic customs and it moves in the Slavic circle of learned men. Among Slavs a Croat can be a Croat.”²³³

Gaj’s ideas, though largely responsible for the Croat “awakening”, were nothing new. During the Renaissance, especially in the areas around the Dalmatian coast which were under Venetian rule, Slavic writers hardly ever referred to the Croats as a single-nation. In 1525 on the island of Hvar in the Adriatic, the Dominican friar Vinko Pribojevic gave a speech to his fellow islanders on the glory of the Slavic “race”. He addressed his audience that he would “speak in the first place on the origin and glory of the Slavic nation . . . and then about the history of Dalmatia, which is an important part of Slavdom.”²³⁴ He also claimed that the

²³² Elinor Murray Despalatovic, *Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement* (Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1975), 2.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 53.

²³⁴ Quoted in John V.A. Fine Jr., *When Ethnicity did not Matter in the Balkans: A Study of Pre-Nationalist Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009), 224.

Slavs had settled throughout Croatia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Serbia and Bulgaria in biblical times.²³⁵ This, he argued, was enough for one to “see the power and widespread-ness of the Slavic family.”²³⁶ Other writers, especially in Croatia but also in areas inhabited by Serbs, made similar statements though more and more began to employ the term “Illyrian” to differentiate South Slavs from other Slavs, since it was believed at the time that the Illyrians of antiquity were proto-Slavs.

What separated Gaj from earlier Croatian intellectuals were his attempts at unifying the dialects spoken by all the South Slavs into a single language, which he interchangeably referred to as a single Illyrian or Croatian language. He claims to have realized the linguistic similarity of the South Slavs as a young student in 1826. As a student he went to study at the Croatian city of Karlovac, which was much more densely populated than his hometown. He recalls his experience like this: “I realized that my homeland lay also beyond the confines of [his hometown] . . . At Karlovac I saw men and women of the old stock, of the core of our Croat and Serb nation. I listened to their vigorous language . . . the loveliness and dignity of the Illyrian language were revealed to me.”²³⁷ Gaj’s “revelation” was also nothing new, Dalmatian travelers passing through the Ottoman Empire noticed the similarities between all of the dialects, though nothing seemed to come from them.²³⁸ Gaj’s dedication to the unification of the language came from more than just noticing similarities. Like so many of modern European states’ “national awakenings”, it took cultural intrusion from an outside group considered foreign to spark the Croatian “Renaissance”. Gaj’s revelation in 1826 coincided with the “Magyarization” of the Kingdom of Hungary’s domains. In 1827 a law was passed that made Hungarian an obligatory subject in all Croatian schools. This process would continue throughout the period of the Illyrian movement’s rise to political power in Croatia, and by 1848 it was officially decreed that the Magyar language was to replace Latin

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Quoted in Despalatovic, *Ljudevit Gaj*, 34.

²³⁸ See Antun Vrancic, sent on a diplomatic mission to the Ottoman Sultan. Fine Jr., *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter*, 256.

as the official language of the Hungarian Kingdom and all of its dependencies.²³⁹ At the first sign of Hungarian replacing Latin in Croatia, Gaj began to fear that “unless the Croatian language were sufficiently developed as a modern language when Latin was discarded, it would be replaced by Magyar.”²⁴⁰

The Illyrian Movement, and thus the Croatian “national awakening”, is believed to have officially begun in the mid 1830s with the publishing of Gaj’s literary journals *Danica Ilirska* and *Ilirske Novine*. In these journals Gaj attempted to codify the language based on the dialect spoken by the majority of Croats and Serbs in the Austro-Hungarian Empire (the so-called Sto-kavian dialect). Although the main purpose of Gaj’s journals was to unify the language and promote its use, they also helped spread the idea that all Slavs made up a single race and nation; after all, Gaj’s views on nationality and race were based on his belief in the unity of language. According to him: “It is in language, above all things, that the life of the nation is reflected. Spirit and language are organically and inseparably united. Language is actually spirit making itself evident.”²⁴¹ Therefore, since all South Slavs spoke the same language, they were a single nation and should live together in a “Greater Illyria” which would encompass all lands inhabited by Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and even Bulgarians. An article from *Danica Ilirska*, published in 1847 at the height of the Illyrian Movement’s popularity demonstrates the sentiment among Gaj and his followers: “all of us South Slavs, who are brothers of one blood and one language, though with small dialectical differences, do not contribute to one unifying goal. This is an evil that goes against our literary culture. But our strength will not crumble...” The article then goes on to state that without unity, the South Slavs would remain small and therefore, they must be “firmly united.”²⁴² Despite the popularity of Gaj’s journals and the success of his developments of the Serbo-Croatian language however, his ideas and those of his followers were mostly confined to elite circles. But his ideas, as we will see, did eventually spread to the peasantry.

²³⁹ Despalatovic, *Ljudevit Gaj*, 185.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

²⁴² “Nesto iz Kranjske,” *Danica: Horvatska, Slavonska, i Dalmatinska*, January 16, 1847, no.3.

While Gaj is considered to be the man most responsible for the rise of Croatian nationalism, Ante Starcevic (1823-1896) was considered by many Croats to be the “father of the fatherland.” Although inspired by Gaj’s works as well as the ideas promoted in his journals, Starcevic took a much more exclusive approach to the idea of a Croatian, or Illyrian, nation. Whereas Gaj promoted a culturally autonomous Illyrian kingdom that would remain under Habsburg rule, Starcevic and his Party of Rights promoted an autonomous Croatia with self-rule. The independent or autonomous Croatia would include all lands inhabited by Croats, including all of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while excluding all non-Croats. He believed that Bosnijaks (Bosnian Muslims) were racially equal to Croats and argued that they were “the purest of the nation” and that they were “brothers in blood, language and tradition, only different in religion.”²⁴³ When it came to Serbs however, he would make conflicting statements at different points in his life. At times, he claimed that Serbs were not even a nation. Instead, he considered them to be Croats who were forced to convert to Orthodoxy under Ottoman occupation.²⁴⁴ Other times, however, he referred to them as “Slavoserbs”; a foreign people who were threatening Croatia’s nationhood. According to him the Slavoserb race is “garbage; a species of people who will sell themselves and Croatia to any buyer.”²⁴⁵ He also claimed that until the Slavoserbs are “weeded out”, they will continue to assist Austria in “wiping the Croatians off the face of the earth.”²⁴⁶ These sentiments, while they do not blatantly take on a biological-racist character, give support to Rory Yeoman’s claim that “at the heart of Croatian racial ideology was the nature of the relationship with the Serbs living in Croatia and Bosnia, and what extreme Croatian nationalists often perceived to be a struggle for survival against them.”²⁴⁷ Probably because of complaints by members of the

²⁴³ Given in Tomislav Ladan, introduction to *Politicki Spisi*, by Ante Starcevic (Zagreb: Ciklus, 1971), 28.

²⁴⁴ Dr. Jurcic, *Svjetski Rat i Hrvati: Pokus Orientacija Hrvatskoga Naroda Jos Prije Svrsetka Rata* (Zagreb: Komisionalna Naklada Knjizare Mirka Breyera, 1917), 105.

²⁴⁵ Given in Ladan, introduction to *Politicki Spisi*, 44.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Rory Yeomans, “Of “Yugoslav Barbarians” and Croatian Gentlemen Scholars: Nationalist Ideology and Racial Anthropology in Interwar Yugoslavia,” in *Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940*, ed. Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007), 102.

Illyrian movement who wanted to maintain good relations between Serbs and Croats in the Empire, Starcevic defended himself and decided to clarify his definition of “Slavoserbs.” He claimed that he was not referring to a specific nationality, but people belonging to any national group who were working for foreigners against the will of the people.²⁴⁸ It is hard to tell whether he was being sincere or trying to save face, but either way, he considered the “Slavoserbs” to be a “degenerate and inferior race, the ancestors of nomadic Vlach shepherds that had settled in Croatia and Bosnia” in the middle ages and they would have to be “exterminated from the nation.”²⁴⁹

Both Starcevic and Gaj’s ideas influenced the ways in which Croats viewed the Serbs well into the 20th century. While both of their ideas were originally confined to political and social elite circles in Croatia, at the turn of the century the Croatian Peasant Party began publishing a newspaper in which a blend of both of their influences can be seen. One article of the Peasant Party newspaper, *Dom* (Home) from 1899, calls for an independent Croatia rather than a “Greater Illyria” within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, reflecting Starcevic’s sentiments rather than Gaj’s. It is stated that “the home of the Croats is not only around Zagreb [the capital], it is also in Split, in Dubrovnik, in Trieste, Sarajevo and Mostar [both in Bosnia-Herzegovina]. In these regions live a people of one blood and one language.”²⁵⁰ Although the article refers to the “home of the Croats”, later on in the same paper it is stated that “the people in Serbia are of the same tribe and language as us,” showing how Gaj’s idea of a single South Slavic linguistic-race had spread to the peasantry at the turn of the century.²⁵¹

Other authors in the first half of the 20th century, however, took an approach much more similar to Starcevic’s. In 1904 Croat anthropologist Ciro Truhelka (1865-1942) published *Croatian Bosnia: Us and Them over There*. In the text, he maintained that while Croats and Bosnian Muslims were identical genetically, Orthodox Serbs represented “a

²⁴⁸ Given in Ladan, introduction to *Politicki Spisi*, 47.

²⁴⁹ Yeomans, “Of “Yugoslav Barbarians”,” 103.

²⁵⁰ Dr. Antun Radic, ed., “Prva Riec Citaocu,” *Dom*, December 15, 1899, no. 1.

²⁵¹ Dr. Antun Radic, ed., “Srbija,” *Dom*, August 1, 1900, no. 15.

black-skinned, overwhelmingly dark, physical degenerate type.”²⁵² Although such a claim seems ridiculous, since Croats and Serbs are visually indistinguishable based on physical features, Truhelka’s ideas were based on a belief among some Croatian nationalist intellectuals that Croats were a mix between Aryans and “Dinaric Slavs”, while Serbs had Vlach, or Aromanian, origins. Truhelka was not alone in this view. During World War I Croatian lawyer and opponent of Yugoslav unification Ivo Pilar (1874-1933) wrote that the Serbs of Bosnia were Vlachs brought to the region by the Ottoman Turks, and that the Croats were engaged in a “race war, a national, social and economic war” against them.²⁵³ He also claimed in his 1915 work *World War and the Croats: An attempt to Orient the Croatian People Even Before the War’s End* that the Serbian minority in Croatia presented a “difficult problem” whose presence made the Croatians uneasy. He went on to state that the Serbian problem “will be solved . . . The Serb needed only 300 years to settle [in Croatia] and it will take the same to get rid of him.”²⁵⁴ He doesn’t offer any suggestions on how to get rid of them. Instead, he declares that it is up to the younger “sons” of Croatia since his own generation knows too little on the origins of the Serbs and how they came to Croatia.²⁵⁵

During the interwar period, when pan-Slavists’ dreams were realized with the unification of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, racial rhetoric separating Serbs from Croats began gaining wide-spread use among Croatian-nationalist intellectuals. Nationalist intellectual and professor of anthropology at the University of Zagreb, Milan Sufflay (1879-1931), published an essay in 1922 in which he claimed that “the Croat name, the blood of Croatdom, does not mean simply a nation! Here the blood of Croatdom means civilization. . . . But in [Yugoslavia] in which it now finds itself, it sees something that is worse than death, it sees the Balkanization of the Croat nation.”²⁵⁶ Although such rhetoric during the interwar period reflects the feeling of discontent among many Croats living under a Serb-dominated monarchy, the racial undertones were blatant. In 1937 a Catholic priest by the name of

²⁵² Quoted in Yeomans, “Of “Yugoslav Barbarians”,”104.

²⁵³ Yeomans, “Of “Yugoslav Barbarians”,”105.

²⁵⁴ Dr. Jurcic, *Svjetski Rat*, 117.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Quoted in Yeomans, “Of “Yugoslav Barbarians”,” 107.

Krunoslav Draganovic published a study in which he claimed that Serbs were “Slav-Romanian-Albanian hybrids” and unlike Croats, they had “dark nomadic Slav elements of a very alien blood.”²⁵⁷ On the anniversary of Ante Starcevic’s death in 1936, Stjepan Buc (1888-1975), who is described by Jozo Tomasevich as a “maverick pro-German Croatian nationalist politician,”²⁵⁸ published an article in the magazine *Independence* in which he reinvented Starcevic as a Nazi to reflect the growing National Socialist sympathy in Croatia. Buc used Starcevic to claim that Serbs were a people with “foreign blood” whose “degenerate behavior” was an expression of the “voice of their blood.”²⁵⁹

Rory Yeomans argues that such blatantly racist rhetoric found in some of the writings of Croatian nationalists “created an intellectual atmosphere in which genocide could be legitimated.”²⁶⁰ He also argues that their sentiments stemmed from 19th century theories of “nationalist exclusivity”, promoted by writers such as Starcevic. There is much truth to this, since before organizing the Ustashi Party and becoming the dictator of the Independent State of Croatia, Ante Pavelic acted as vice-president of the Party of Rights; the party co-founded by Ante Starcevic in the previous century. However, while Starcevic argued that an independent and Great Croatia had no room for “Slavoserbs”, he also considered Serbs to be Orthodox Croats, and therefore, believed that Croatia was a multi-religious nation; Catholic, Muslim and Orthodox. Inspired by an extreme interpretation of Starcevic’s writings as well as some of the more biologically racist rhetoric of the early 20th century, Ustashi leaders saw any political Serb identity as being “derived through the agency of the Serbian Orthodox Church, but they also saw Serbs as being different by blood.”²⁶¹ This confusion on how the Ustashi leaders viewed Serbs is reflected in the order to expel 1/3, kill 1/3 and convert 1/3 to Catholicism. While the part of the order calling for conversion mirrors some of the processes of forced assimilation that have been discussed in previous chapters, the other two parts of

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁵⁸ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 431.

²⁵⁹ Yeomans, “Of “Yugoslav Barbarians”,”112.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

²⁶¹ Mark Biondich, “Religion and Nation in Wartime Croatia: Reflections on the Ustasa Policy of Forced Religious Conversions, 1941-1942,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 83, no. 1 (Jan., 2005): 78.

the order mostly reflect the early 20th century rhetoric of national exclusion. While the two different sides of Croatian nationalism sometimes overlapped during World War II, it was the racial theories of national exclusion that were mostly employed by the Ustashi regime, and the ones responsible for the high number of deaths among Serbs, as well as Jews and Roma, in the NDH between 1941 and 1945.

Mark Biondich argues that while there were some members of the Ustashi Party who were in support of conversion as a means of “Croatizing” the Serbs, the process of forced conversions as official policy in the NDH was “functionalist” rather than “intentionalist.” According to the functionalist approach, widespread religious conversions only occurred after a shift in the NDH’s anti-Serbian policy was required. This shift in policy came about due to the Germans’ forbidding of the deportation of Serbs to Nazi-occupied Serbia in the fall of 1941. Also, the NDH’s deportation and execution of Serbian civilians had led to a huge number of Serbs and Croats joining various resistance groups, especially the communist Partizans whose policy of “brotherhood and unity” was nationally inclusive.²⁶² That the Ustashi mainly viewed the NDH’s Serbs as a racial, rather than a religious, threat can be seen by the fact that the official policy of conversion lasted less than a year.²⁶³ Also, even during conversions the mass killings continued. The prospect of conversion was often merely used as a tool by Ustashi militiamen to obtain more victims. While promising fair treatment to the Serbs if they willingly converted to the Catholic Church, Ustashi militiamen would precede to massacre the converts anyways. In one small village called Stikade, Serbs were invited by a Catholic priest to convert. Once they accepted conversion, they were surrounded by men with rifles and sledgehammers who killed them all and threw their bodies into a mass grave.²⁶⁴ In the larger town of Glina, 250 Serbian peasants were led into an Orthodox Church where they were told they would be converted. Once inside, the peasants were ordered to lie on the ground whence a number of Ustashi militiamen began beating them to death with clubs. According to the report of this incident, which was used during the Nuremberg Trials,

²⁶² Ibid., 87.

²⁶³ Ibid., 109.

²⁶⁴ Embassy of the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia, *The Case of Archbishop Stepinac* (Washington, 1947), 57.

“every single peasant was murdered in this fashion.”²⁶⁵ “The Situation in Yugoslavia” claims that the entire Serbian population in towns such as Banjaluka and Bihac in Bosnia-Herzegovina had been wiped out, either by execution or deportation, at the time of writing.²⁶⁶ With the mass killings continuing in the NDH throughout the War, it is evident that “despite the prospect of conversion . . . [the Ustashi] continued to view Serbs as a racial threat.”²⁶⁷

While the Ustashi’s exclusive policies against the Serbs were derived from a tradition dating back to the 19th century, the Ustashi Party and their ideas lacked significant support from among the Croatian population. The majority of Croats during the War, while increasingly pressed between fascism and communism, continued to support the Peasant Party.²⁶⁸ As stated before, the Peasant Party, while supporting an independent Croatia free from Serbian domination, considered the Serbs to be members of the same “tribe.” Also, well into the War, the Party maintained an anti-Ustashi stance and in 1943 issued pamphlets calling for a Croatia completely free of Ustashi influence.²⁶⁹ While the Ustashi claimed to have had over 40,000 members in 1941, even after establishing youth organizations and attracting some right-wing members of the Peasant Party and conservative clergymen, their number of members was more likely around 900 at that time.²⁷⁰ The Ustashi also tried to claim support from the Muslim majority in Bosnia-Herzegovina, however, even there its popularity was lacking. According to Emily Greble in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, the city’s leaders maintained the view that identity was exclusively religious in nature, a view which dates back to Turkish rule.²⁷¹ Therefore, they viewed the Ustashi’s persecution of Serbs, both conversions and executions, as religiously motivated. With this view of the conflict, many of the Bosnian Muslims were left with the impression that conversion to

²⁶⁵ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 500.

²⁶⁶ D.K., “The Situation in Yugoslavia,” 1073.

²⁶⁷ Biondich, *Religion and Nation*, 103-4.

²⁶⁸ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 337.

²⁶⁹ D.K., “The Situation in Yugoslavia,” 1072.

²⁷⁰ Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 337.

²⁷¹ Emily Greble, *Sarajevo, 1941-1945: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Hitler’s Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 3.

Catholicism or execution on religious grounds by the same regime were what was in store for them.

Although the NDH issued a conscription for all adult Croatian men, the majority of “rank and file” Croatians were drafted into the Home Guard (Domobrani) rather than the Ustashi militias. The Home Guard acted as the Army of the NDH until 1944, though their efficiency was lacking in part because of leadership, but mostly because of dissatisfaction and lack of morale among the Home Guard troops. Stevo Julius, a Croatian Jew, joined the communist Partizans with his family as a young teenager. According to him, sons of the rich and privileged were able to avoid the draft completely, while only the “rabid Nationalists” volunteered for the Ustashi militias. Therefore, the Home Guard was made up of mostly poor, uneducated young men whose only goal was survival. He recalls one incident where he and a group of Partizans were on their way to another village held by Tito’s forces. On the way, they came across a group of Home Guards who were guarding a bridge. The Home Guards let them pass, and then began shooting in the other direction to make it look as if they had at least attempted to stop them.²⁷² Fitzroy Maclean, who met Tito in person at his headquarters in Bosnia and had gone on several missions with the Partizans, also reports that the Home Guards were hardly ever willing to carry out their orders. According to him, they acted as a sort of weapons cache for the Partizans, who would capture them, take their weapons, and then let them go so that they could rearm and then be captured again.²⁷³ The Home Guards deserted and joined the Partizans in such high numbers that the Ustashi regime finally had to attach the entire Home Guard to the Ustashi forces in 1944. While Stevo Julius claims that the Home Guards’ main concern was survival, the high number of desertions and lack of willingness to carry out orders was also a reflection of the unpopularity of the extreme measures of the Ustashi regime. In 1941 the Nazi official in Croatia, Edmund Glaise von Horstenau, reported that the “rank and file [of the Croatian Army] often feel that the civil war is a war between brothers.”²⁷⁴

²⁷² Stevo Julius, *Neither Red Nor Dead: Coming of Age in Former Yugoslavia During and After World War II* (Ann Arbor: Medvista, 2003), 72-73.

²⁷³ Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 345.

²⁷⁴ Quoted in Tomasevich, *War and Revolution*, 424.

By the end of the War, when Croatia became a republic in the Yugoslav Federation, the racial exclusivity of the Croatian nation promoted by some nationalists and intellectuals had completely failed. Its failure was due, for the most part, to a lack of popularity among the Croatian population; a population who still seemed to hold onto an idea that dated back to Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement. The Croatians' desire for independence could not override the Peasant Party's early claim that the Serbs and Croats were members of the same "tribe". Nor could their desire for independence ignore Gaj's belief in the unity of language and the inner connection between its speakers. The official language of Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1991 was Serbo-Croatian, a language which was heavily inspired by Gaj's codified "Illyrian" language. If the Ustashi had abandoned its racially exclusive policy toward the NDH's Serbs, and instead replaced it with a policy of forced assimilation similar to the policies adopted by the Serbs and Bulgarians in Macedonia, would it have been more popular and thus successful? The answer can only be speculative. A conclusion that can be drawn as fact in response to the Ustashi's failure in fully carrying out the order to expel 1/3, kill 1/3 and convert 1/3, however, is that the Croatian "imagined community" was by no means a homogenous concept shared between the central state power and the majority of its subjects.

CONCLUSION

In this work I have shown some of the developments of nationalism in the Balkans and their outcome; in other words, nationalism in practice. Although I have focused mainly on the Macedonian Slavs and the Croatian Serbs, and placed their experiences with nationalism between 1913 and 1945, sadly, there are many more cases. The forced assimilation and extermination or expulsion of groups in the Balkans occurred in almost every Balkan nation-state. Also, this dark side of nationalism was not confined to the period between the end of the Balkan Wars and the end of World War II. As late as the early 1980s Bulgaria was criticized by Amnesty International for carrying out a forced assimilation campaign against its Turkish minority. According to their report the Bulgarian government forced the Bulgarian Turks to exchange their Islamic names for Bulgarian ones, “and, in effect, to renounce their religion and ethnic identity.”²⁷⁵ In some cases Turks were prohibited from speaking Turkish in public and from wearing shalvars, which are traditional Islamic-style pants. Also, reminiscent of what we have already seen in Macedonia between 1913 and 1945, in some cases Bulgarian troops forced people at gun-point to change their names, with torture and imprisonment, or even execution, as the punishment for noncompliance.²⁷⁶ But how could such a thing occur after 1945, when Europeans “took a deep breath” and “swore to themselves: Never again!”²⁷⁷

Hobsbawm shows us how the Europe based on “the Principle of Nationality” after the Paris Peace Conference did not work. The Principle, which was strongly supported by President Woodrow Wilson, called for the creation of territorial states to coincide with homogenous national groups. This, as we have seen, led to assimilation, expulsion and extermination. A major paradox, however, is pointed out by Hobsbawm. According to him

²⁷⁵ Amnesty International, *Bulgaria, Imprisonment of Ethnic Turks: Human Rights Abuses During the Forced Assimilation of the Ethnic Turkish Minority* (London: Amnesty International Publications, 1986), 5.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

²⁷⁷ Leo Tindemans, *Unfinished Peace: Report of the International Commission on the Balkans* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996), 1.

the paradox lies in the fact that despite the disastrous outcome of applying the “Principle of Nationality” to nation-states, the frontiers created by the Peace Conference, despite some minor changes, have persisted. Because of the persistence of these “nation-states”, and the fact that the natural outcome of the “Wilsonian Principle” of nationality was that “people did not identify with their ‘nation’ in the way prescribed for them by their leaders and spokesmen,”²⁷⁸ it is easy to see why what happened between 1913 and 1945 was still occurring in the 1980s.

While the Bulgarian government proceeded to carry out its forced assimilation of the Turks, the nationalist rhetoric we have already seen in the 19th and early 20th centuries was still being used. While the Turkish minority, about 900,000 people, made up 10% of the Bulgarian population, the former Prime Minister of Bulgaria Stanko Todorov claimed in 1985, while the forced assimilations were taking place, that Bulgaria was a “one-nation state” and that in the “Bulgarian nation there are no parts of any other peoples and nations.”²⁷⁹ In response to the allegations by Amnesty International, the Bulgarian government responded that the Bulgarian Turks did not have Turkish origins. Instead, they were Bulgarians who were forced to convert to Islam during the Ottoman conquest. Therefore, the Bulgarian government reasoned, all Bulgarians, including the Turkish-speaking Muslims, were “the children of one common country, from one common race, and share a common origin.”²⁸⁰ Again, we see that such claims are made contrary to the realities of self-identification nor do they even bother to take them into account. These claims used by the Bulgarian government in the 1980s are the same claims nationalists in the later phases of European nationalism used to justify nation-building.

To say that traditional, nationalist claims used by Bulgaria to justify its actions against the Turkish minority were in contrast to their actual self and group-identification is not, however, to say that there were no Turkish-speakers who considered themselves Bulgarians or were Bulgarian patriots. What this does say is that the Turkish-speaking

²⁷⁸ Hobsbawm, *Nations*, 135.

²⁷⁹ Amnesty Int’l, *Bulgaria*, 5.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

minority, much like the Macedonians who often considered themselves Bulgarians, had their own ideas of who they were and yet these sentiments were not taken into account or respected by the official-line of Bulgarian nationalism. Amnesty International reports that several Turkish-speakers resisted the government's attempts at forcing them to change their names, though there is no proof that they were in any way "separatists" or more loyal to Turkey than to Bulgaria. Some of those who resisted were "summarily executed".²⁸¹ This has been a common-trait of European nationalism since the 19th century and the pattern continues today. The idea that nations are comprised of homogeneous racial and linguistic groups is still used in Europe in the 21st century, and that such groups should be congruent with political states, reflecting Ernst Gellner's definition of nationalism, is still a widespread belief.

While the beginning of the 20th century saw a series of nationalist-inspired wars in the Balkans, the end of the century saw more of the same thing. Between 1991 and 1995 the former Yugoslavia was broken down in a series of wars in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo. While these wars became infamous for their brutality, ethnic-cleansing, genocide, rape and destruction, there was a major difference between these wars and the Balkan Wars almost 90 years earlier. In Croatia and Bosnia, where the fighting exposed its most brutal character, there are no accounts of mass forced assimilation. Instead, as Michael Ignatieff puts it, the wars were based on the "narcissism of minor difference".²⁸² Instead of claiming peoples who "belonged" to their nations, leaders of the ex-Yugoslav republics instead focused on those who they believed did not. Ignatieff claims that, since the Yugoslavs had lived for almost 50 years under the communist ideal of "brotherhood and unity", they had to define easily visible enemies in order to remind themselves of who they were. Therefore, "a Croat, thus, is someone who is not a Serb. A Serb is someone who is not a Croat."²⁸³ Also, I would add, the "apogee" of nationalism promoted by Hobsbawm had, for the most part, already been completed. Therefore, by the 1990s national identities had

²⁸¹ Ibid., 13.

²⁸² Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), 22.

²⁸³ Ibid.

already gained wide-spread support, and, were by now more fixed than they were before World War II. This perhaps explains why, during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatian forces attacked the Muslims of Herzegovina and demolished the Mostar Bridge that had connected the two communities for centuries. Franjo Tudjman, the president of the independent Croatia, was hostile toward Muslims. He considered them dangerous and believed they were a “bridgehead of Islamic fundamentalism.”²⁸⁴ But as we have seen in the previous chapter, Croatian ethnic-nationalism, beginning with Ante Starcevic, included the Bosnian Muslims and perceived them as racially akin to Croats. This is just one of the many examples of how the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s differed from the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913.

Even in the 21st century we are seeing the effects of the nationalist claims I have analyzed throughout this work. Since the turn of the century two new nation-states have emerged in the Balkans, Montenegro and Kosovo. There is nothing to suggest, however, that there is no possibility more states will emerge. Because the Principle of Nationality determines that nations are only nations if they have some relationship with a current or historic state, and that this idea still persists, there are separatist groups in every single Balkan nation-state, and many in Central and Western Europe. These separatist groups, often considered “ethnic minorities”, base their claims to nationhood on all the same ideas we have discussed. In their eyes, they are homogeneous racial, linguistic or cultural groups either without their own state; such as the Basques and Catalans, or are members of a nation-state different than the ones they find themselves in; such as the Slavs in Austria and Trieste, or the Hungarians in Serbia. The problem with the idea that the “the national and political unit should be congruent”, which has so far seemed to stand the test of time, is that, as we have seen from the problems that arose after the Paris Peace Conference, achieving national homogeneity is virtually impossible. Kosovo, the newest Balkan state, declared independence from Serbia in 2008. According to the Principle of Nationality this action was completely legitimate. After all, the Albanians were a linguistic, and in their eyes, racial group that had lived in a geographic location for centuries, which they claimed as their state.

²⁸⁴ Glenny, *The Balkans*, 645.

However, almost immediately after the Kosovar Albanians declared independence, the large Serb minority, which constitutes a majority in the north, rejected the move and is now living in a de-facto autonomous region of northern Kosovo. The Serbs in northern Kosovo, while NATO and EULEX forces are attempting to forcefully integrate them into the Kosovo state, are becoming more and more militant in their rejection of central state authority. Therefore, it would not be surprising if one day they declared themselves independent from Kosovo. If this were to happen, the new independent Serbian-Kosovo would no doubt include a significant number of Albanians. Would they in turn then declare independence themselves? Likewise, in the western part of the Republic of Macedonia there have been incidents since its independence in which the Albanian minority, which makes up a majority in cities like Tetovo and Debar, has shown signs of dissatisfaction with living in a state dominated by Slavs. If these Albanians were to declare themselves autonomous, people who consider themselves Macedonians, Christians and Muslims alike, would still make up a significant portion of the population. What would become of them? As long as national groups claim to represent homogenous populations while ignoring the realities of how people identify themselves, such questions will remain.

REFERENCES

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Ball, Howard. *Genocide: a reference handbook*. Santa Barbra: ABC-CLIO, 2011.
- Banac, Ivo. *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.
- Biondich, Mark. "Religion and Nation in Wartime Croatia: Reflections on the Ustasa Policy of Forced Religious Conversions, 1941-1942." *The Slavonic and East European Review* 83, no. 1 (Jan., 2005): 71-116.
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. *Unfinished Peace: Report of the International Commission on the Balkans*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996.
- Cavalli-Sforza, Luigi Luca and Francesco Cavalli-Sforza. *The Great Human Diasporas: The History of Diversity and Evolution*. Milan: Addison-Wesley, 1995.
- Chary, Frederick. *Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution, 1940-1944*. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press, 1972.
- Danforth, Loring M. *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
- Despalatovic, Elinor Murray. *Ljudevit Gaj and the Illyrian Movement*. Boulder: East European Quarterly, 1975.
- Fine Jr., John V.A. *When Ethnicity did not Matter in the Balkans: A Study of Pre-Nationalist Croatia, Dalmatia, and Slavonia in the Medieval and Early-Modern Periods*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009.
- Frusetta, James. *Bulgaria's Macedonia: Nation-Building and State-Building, Centralization and Autonomy in Pirin Macedonia, 1903-1952*. PhD diss., University of Maryland College Park, 2006.
- Geary, Patrick J. *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Glenny, Misha. *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-1999*. New York: Penguin, 1999.
- Greble, Emily. *Sarajevo, 1941-1945: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Hitler's Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Hobsbawm, E.J. *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

- Ignatieff, Michael. *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993.
- Miller, Marshall Lee. *Bulgaria During the Second World War*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975.
- Mitrovski, Boro, Venceslav Glisic and Tomo Ristovski. *Bugarska Vojska U Jugoslaviji: 1941-1945*. Translated by Kordija Kveder. Belgrade: Medjunarodna Politika, 1971.
- Parry, Milman. "Whole Formulaic Verse in Greek and Southslavic Heroic Song." *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 64 (1933): 179-197.
- Pavlowitch, Stevan K. *Hitler's New Disorder: The Second World War in Yugoslavia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Poulton, Hugh. *Who Are The Macedonians?* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Rihtman-Augustin, Dunja. *Ethnology, Myth and Politics: Anthropologizing Croatian Ethnology*. Translated and edited by Jasna Capo Zmegac. Burlington: Ashgate, 2004.
- Roucek, Joseph S. "The Eternal Problem of Macedonia," *International Journal* 2, no.4 (1947): 297-307.
- _____. ed. *Slavonic Encyclopaedia*. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1949.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fragility of Goodness: Why Bulgaria's Jews Survived the Holocaust*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Tomasevich, Jozo. *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941-1945: Occupation and Collaboration*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.
- Trotsky, Leon. *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky: The Balkan Wars, 1912-13*. With an introduction by George Lavan Weissman. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1980.
- Weber, Eugen. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976.
- Yeomans, Rory. "Of "Yugoslav Barbarians" and Croatian Gentlemen Scholars: Nationalist Ideology and Racial Anthropology in Interwar Yugoslavia." *In Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe, 1900-1940*, ed. Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Amnesty International. *Bulgaria, Imprisonment of Ethnic Turks: Human Rights Abuses During the Forced Assimilation of the Ethnic Turkish Minority*. London: Amnesty International Publications, 1986.
- Anastasoff, Chris, ed. *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia: A Symposium*. Indianapolis: Central Committee of the Macedonian Political Organization of the United States and Canada, 1945.

- Bonsal, Stephen. "The Gordian Knot in Macedonia." *The North American Review* 177, no.563 (1903): 494-505.
- Brailsford, Henry Noel. *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*. London: Methuen & co., 1905.
- Buck, Carl Darling. "Language and the Sentiment of Nationality." *The American Political Science Review* 10, no. 1 (Feb., 1916): 44-69.
- Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History. *Documents and Materials on the History of the Bulgarian People*. Edited by D. Kosev and H. Hristov. Sofia: Pub. House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1969.
- _____. *Macedonia: Documents and Material*. Edited by Voin Bozhinov and L Panayotov. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Bulgarskata Akademiia na Naukite, 1978.
- _____. *Macedonia: Documents and Material* [book on-line]. Sofia: 1978, accessed 1 June 2012. Available from <http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/en/ban/index.html>.
- Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Intercourse and Education. *Report of the International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*. Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1914.
- Christowe, Stoyan. *Heroes and Assassins*. New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1935.
- Corey, Herbert. "On the Monastir Road." *National Geographic*, May 1917.
- Cvijic, Jovan. "The Zones of Civilization in the Balkan Peninsula." *Geographical Review* 5, no.6 (Jun., 1918): 470-482.
- _____. "The Geographical Distribution of the Balkan Peoples." *Geographical Review* 5, no.5 (May, 1918): 345-361.
- D.G.H. "The Balkan Lands." Review of *Remarks on the Ethnology of the Macedonian Slavs*, by Jovan Cvijic, *The Geographical Journal* 28, no.5 (Nov., 1906): 499-501.
- Djilas, Milovan. *Memoir of a Revolutionary*. Translated by Drenka Willen. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973.
- D.K. "The Situation in Yugoslavia: I. Administration under Axis Occupation." *Bulletin of International News* 20, no.25 (Dec., 1943): 1071-1078.
- Durham, Mary Edith. *The Burden of the Balkans*. London: Edward Arnold, 1905.
- _____. "The Serbs and the Macedonian Struggle." *La Macedoine* 4, no.168 (May, 1931). Given in *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*.
- Embassy of the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia. *The Case of Archbishop Stepinac*. Washington, 1947.
- Evans, Sir Arthur J. "Who the Macedonians Are." (Sep., 1903). In *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*.
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. *Addresses to the German Nation*. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1922.

- Filipovic, D.J. *Podoljubive Pesme: Kosovski Bozuri, Kraljevic Marko – Kotarski Serdari Oslobodjenje*. Belgrade: Srpska Knjizevna Zadruga, 1938.
- George, David Lloyd. "Lloyd George's Opinion on the Macedonians." In *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*.
- Gordon-Smith, Gordon. "Balkan Problems and Their Solution." *Advocate of Peace Through Justice* 84, no. 4 (April, 1922): 143-146.
- Grunbaum, Irene. *Escape Through the Balkans*. Translated by Katherine Morris. London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996.
- Hadzhikimov, Vassil. "Towards Unanimity and Creativity." *Macedonia*, no. 2, (May, 1941). In *Bulgarian Campaign Committees in Macedonia, 1941*.
http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/bugarash/bccc_1941/index.html.
- Hilendar, Paissi of. "Slav-Bulgarian History." Edited by P. Dinekov (1963). In *Macedonia: Documents and Material*.
- Irvine, Jill A. and Carol S. Lilly, eds. *Natalija: Life in the Balkan Powder Keg, 1880-1956*. Translated by Jill A. Irvine and Carol S. Lilly. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2008.
- Johnston, Charles. "Macedonia's Struggle for Liberty." *The North American Review* 176, no.555 (Feb., 1903): 223-235.
- Jordan, David Starr. "The Balkan Tragedy." *The Journal of Race Development* 9, no.2 (Oct., 1918): 120-135.
- Julius, Stevo. *Neither Red Nor Dead: Coming of Age in Former Yugoslavia During and After World War II*. Ann Arbor: Medvista, 2003.
- Jurcic, Dr. [Ivo Pilar]. *Svjetski Rat i Hrvati: Pokus Orientacija Hrvatskoga Naroda Jos Prije Svrsetka Rata*. Zagreb: Komisionalna Naklada Knjizare Mirka Breyera, 1917.
- Kanchov, Vasil. *Orohidrografia na Makedonija*. Plovdiv: Bulgarsko Knizhovno Druzhestvo v Sofia, 1911.
- Karadzic, Vuk. "Dodatak k Sanktpeterburskim Sravniteljim Rjecnicima Sviju Ezika I Narecija s Osobitim Oglecima Bugarska Jezika." Vienna, 1822. In *Macedonia: Documents and Material*. <http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/en/ban/nr1.html#1>.
- Kayser, J. "Free Macedonia in a New Europe." *La Jeune Macedonia* 1, no. 5 (May, 1931). In *The Case For an Autonomous Macedonia*.
- Lantoine, Albert. "The Macedonian Problem." *Macedonia* 1, no. 10 (Dec., 1932). In *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*.
- Lamouche, Col. L. "A Few Words on the History of Macedonia." In *The Case For an Autonomous Macedonia*.
- Macedonicus. *Stalin and the Macedonian Question*. Translated and edited by Chris Anastasoff. St. Louis: Pearlstone, 1948.
- Maclean, Fitzroy. *Eastern Approaches*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1949.

- Makedonsko Delo*, no. 50, September 25, 1927 In *Macedonia: Documents and Materials*.
<http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/en/ban/nr1.html#1>.
- Miladinov Brothers. "Correspondence." (1964): 17-21. In *Macedonia: Documents and Material*.
- Milioukoff, P.N. "The National Character of the Macedonians." (Jun., 1913). In *The Case For an Autonomous Macedonia*.
- Minchev, Dimitre, ed. *Bulgarian Campaign Committees in Macedonia, 1941* [book on-line].
 Sofia: Makedonski Naucen Inst., 1995, accessed 3 July 2012. Available from
http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/bugarash/bccc_1941/index.html; Internet.
- Minchin, James George Cotton. *The Growth of Freedom in the Balkan Peninsula: Notes of a Traveller in Montenegro, Bosnia, Servia, Bulgaria, and Greece*. London: John Murray, 1886.
- Misirkov, Krste. *Za Makedonskite Raboti: Jubilejno Izadanie po Povod na Stogodinsninata Od Ragjanjeto na Avtorot*. Skopje: Institut Za Makedonski Jazik "Krste Misirkov", 1974.
- Morse, Jedidiah and Sidney Edwards Morse. *A New System of Geography, Ancient and Modern, for the Use of Schools, Accompanied with an Atlas, Adapted to the Work*. Boston: Richardson & Lord, 1824.
- "Nesto iz Kranjske," *Danica: Horvatska, Slavonska, i Dalmatinska*, January 16, 1847, no.3.
- Pozzi, Henri. "The Macedonian Question." In *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*.
- Proclamation of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia.
 "Macedonian People on Alert!" In *Makedonija niz Vekovite*. Edited by Zoran Todorovski. Skopje: Drzaven Arhiv na Republika Makedonija, 2001.
- Puljevski, Djordjija M. *Recnik od tri Jezika*. Belgrade: Drazavnoj Stampariji, 1875.
- Radic, Dr. Antun, ed. "Prva Riec Citaocu." *Dom*, December 15, 1899, no.1.
 _____. "Srbija." *Dom*, August 1, 1900, no.15.
- Shaldev, Hristo and Ilia Schaldev. *Extracts From the Memoirs of Hristo Shaldev: Macedonian Revolutionary 1876-1962*. Adelaide: Macedonian Patriotic Organization, 1993.
- Spencer, Edmund. *Travels in European Turkey, in 1850: Through Bosnia, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thrace, Albania, and Epirus; With a Visit to Greece and the Ionian Isles, vol. II*. London: Colburn and Co., 1851.
- Stanoyevich, Milivoy. "The Ethnography of the Yugo-Slavs." *Geographical Review* 7, no.2 (Feb., 1919): 91-97.
- Starcevic, Ante. *Politicki Spisi*. With an introduction by Tomislav Ladan. Zagreb: Ciklus, 1971.
- Sugareff, V.K. "Solution of the Macedonian Question." (Sep., 1939). In *The Case for an Autonomous Macedonia*.

_____. "The Bulgarian Nationality of the Macedonians." *The Journal of Race Development* 9, no.4 (Apr., 1919): 382-393.

Tonjoroff, Svetozar. "Bulgaria and the Treaty of Berlin." *The North American Review* 188, no. 637 (Dec., 1908): 833-841.

United Press, "Says Bulgaria's Price is Serbian Macedonia." *New York Times*, August 11, 1915. <http://www.nytimes.com>.

Villari, Luigi. "The Races and Religions of Macedonia." *National Geographic*, 1912, 1125. http://www.kroraina.com/knigi/en/ng_1912/text.html.

Wagner, Lt. Hermenegild. *With the Victorious Bulgarians*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913.

West, Rebecca. *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia*. New York: The Viking Press, 1941.