

**“SHOOT THE TEACHER!”
EDUCATION AND THE ROOTS OF THE
MACEDONIAN STRUGGLE**

by

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Department
of
History

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Fall 2005

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ABSTRACT

Education brought nationalism from Western Europe to the nineteenth century Balkans, upsetting the theocratic order of the Ottoman Empire.

The children of Christian merchants journeyed abroad for better education and many returned imbued with nationalism and a determination to agitate against Ottoman rule. The Ottoman Empire's structure permitted Christians to educate themselves, allowing the educated returnees to inspire future generations. The educated generations made vital contributions to the revolutionary uprisings in Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria, which led to independence.

However, no one nation dominated the mixed population of Ottoman Macedonia. Competition from neighbouring states intensified after 1878 with teachers arriving to vie for the loyalty of the population. This "Education Race" produced new generations of patriots for the rival nations. Additionally, a group of Macedonian Slavs emerged who declared "Macedonia for the Macedonians," and initiated an armed uprising in 1903 that marked the onset of the Macedonian Struggle of 1903-1908.

Keywords

Macedonia, Macedonian Struggle, Balkans, Education, Nationalism.

To the memory of my father, Allan Cecil Brooks, who encouraged my interest in history.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my senior supervisor, Dr. André Gerolymatos, for his encouragement and valuable advice, enabling me to turn an array of concepts and facts into a coherent thesis. Thanks also to my supervisor, Dr. Nadine Roth, and my external examiner, Dr. John Iatrides, for their comments and suggestions.

I am grateful to the Edward and Emily McWhinney Foundation Scholarship for the opportunity to attend the 2004 session on multiculturalism and international law at the Institute of International Public Law and International Relations in Thessaloniki, Greece. Thanks to the direction of Dr. Aristotle Constantinides, my article on education rights was published in the Institute's journal. While in Thessaloniki, Persefoni G. Karabati at the Centre for Macedonian History and Documentation helpfully directed me to several useful sources for my thesis.

Dr. Blazhe Ristovski of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Skopje kindly offered his support during the formative days of this thesis. Dr. Penney Clark and Dr. Richard Mackie have greatly aided my development as a historian and as a teacher. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends who gave their time and energies to helping me research and write this thesis, especially my sister, Jocie Ingram, and my brother-in-law, David Ingram, who gave up many hours of their spare time to creating a map and proofreading successive drafts of my thesis.

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Introduction

It [Education] came to Eastern Europe as an achievement of Western civilization. But in the linguistically mixed territories it turned into a dreadful weapon in the hands of governments determined to change the linguistic allegiance of their subjects. The philanthropists and pedagogues of England who advocated public education did not foresee what waves of hatred and resentment would rise out of this institution.

-Ludwig von Mises¹

The Macedonian Struggle of 1903-1908 saw rival parties of nationalist fighters engaging one another and the forces of the Ottoman Empire in a vicious contest for one of the last and most coveted territories in Ottoman Europe—Macedonia. Local guerrilla bands and paramilitary forces led by famous patriots from neighbouring Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia traversed the rugged mountains and forests of the territory, setting ambushes and descending on beleaguered villages to demand provisions and oaths of loyalty from those who had dared to remain. This was a struggle between competing nationalist movements, each of which envisioned Macedonia as an integral part of its nation. The often ghastly violence and the considerable human suffering both appalled and confounded the outside world. The Great Powers sent in humanitarian aid and gendarme “peacekeepers,” yet they lacked the ability—or the will—to stop the bloodshed. Appeals for restraint and bureaucratic reforms could not placate the zealous leaders of the nationalist camps who fought under banners like “Freedom or Death” and established underground networks to support their causes. The inflamed nationalist sentiments that set off and sustained the Macedonian Struggle threatened to provoke regional and international conflicts. It would not be the last time in the twentieth century that a nationalist struggle in the Balkans would threaten to have wider ramifications.

As strong as nationalist sentiment ostensibly was in the Balkans, it was, however, a relatively recent phenomenon. In mid nineteenth century Macedonia, one would have

been hard pressed to find many committed nationalists. Loyalty was first to one's family and village. Identity was primarily religious and adjectives of nationality were to denote social class or occupation. Indeed, the average person in Macedonia in 1850 was likely to be a peasant who spoke a Slavic dialect, attended a Greek Orthodox Church, lived under authority of Muslims and, probably, had very little or no concept of his or her national identity. Yet, within half a century, nationalism arrived, inspiring or forcing the people of Macedonia to take sides in a struggle that was escalating towards violence. Why this sudden shift? What were the forces and agents that accounted for this sudden spread of nationalism and why did it lead to such bloodshed in Macedonia?

The focus of this study is to examine the rapid growth of national movements in the Balkans that triggered the Macedonian Struggle of 1903-1908. Focusing on the area of Geographic Macedonia, I will argue that while religion, commerce and a weakening Ottoman Empire were all conditions that perpetuated the rise of national movements, education was the key factor. With the benefit of the structure of the Ottoman Empire and favourable historical circumstances, teachers were able to exploit their position as respected educators and propagate nationalism amongst Macedonia's residents.

With the Ottoman Empire's hold on Macedonia destined to come to an end, the states of Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia each sent in troops of priests and teachers to win over the hearts, minds and tongues of Macedonia's Slavs. They attempted to consolidate and legitimize their presence by building churches and schools, which would also legitimize their claims to the Great Powers. The teachers told stories of national heroes and brought with them news of the outside world and, in some cases, the values and modern ideologies of liberalism and socialism. Although how much mass appeal the competing national movements had is highly questionable, their competitive pedagogical endeavours produced new generations of teachers committed to national causes who were no longer willing to accept the Ottoman rule. As a result, Ottoman Macedonia was transformed from a relatively submissive province into a cauldron of violent conflict. Bloody strife in Ottoman Macedonia would ultimately lead to its division between four nations, setting in motion further instability and violence, which would not subside until the end of the Greek Civil War in 1949.

¹ Ludwig von Mises, *Omnipotent Government* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1969), 82-83.

The Ottoman Empire had consolidated its hold over the Southern Balkans by the end of the fifteenth century and implemented its *millet* system, which defined identity according to religion. Thus, while nationalism and modernism developed in the West, the Ottoman occupation meant religion would dominate the peoples of the Balkans and they would be kept in a medieval social and economic structure. Even as late as 1903, British journalist and aid worker H.S. Brailsford noted this lack of national identity when he took two Christian boys from a remote mountain village down to the ruins of Czar Samuel's castle in the town of Ohrid in Western Macedonia:

“Who built this place?” I asked them. The answer was significant—“The Free Men.” “And who were they?” “Our grandfathers.” “Yes, but were they Serbs or Bulgarians or Greeks or Turks?” “They weren't Turks, they were Christians.” And this seemed to be about the measure of their knowledge.²

Brailsford also wrote that the population of the remote village the boys were from was entirely illiterate and “had neither a teacher nor a priest,”³ although the town of Ohrid itself had several national schools.

The boys Brailsford conversed with exemplify why the competing national interests used education to propagate nationalism. Thanks to the Ottoman *millet* system, the boys had retained their Christian identity and were aware of a time in the past when their forefathers had been “free.” Yet they did not have a national identity, apparently. Teachers strove to nationalize this religious identity by building on memories of the past as well as local legends and folklore. In addition, the teachers preached emulation of the modern, Christian West and expounded on the glory of European and American revolutionaries. With education, the boys, their grandfathers and the “Free Men” would, ideally, all acquire a uniform, national identity with a sense of a national past and a vision of a revolutionary future. In essence, the teachers sought to create a nation that would become a state or part of a neighbouring state.

The theoretical framework of this thesis borrows from the work of Miroslav Hroch and his theory of the nation building process in Europe. Hroch's theory is derived from examples from Eastern and Central Europe, although he and others acknowledge

² H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1906), 99.

that his model of nation building can be adapted to Western Europe and the Balkans. According to Hroch, a given national movement, in Europe at least, goes through three developmental phases:

Phase A: “scholarly inquiry” where national activists of the given non-dominant ethnic group collect and study information about their history, language and customs.

Phase B: “patriotic agitation” where activists endeavour to awaken a national consciousness amongst the given non-dominant ethnic group.

Phase C: “mass movement” where the majority of the given population has accepted the national identity and can take action to assert itself popularly. In this stage a social structure develops with the movement developing “conservative, clerical, liberal and democratic wings, each with their own programs.”⁴

The argument here is that, in the case of the Southern Balkans and Macedonia, education is central to Hroch’s model. Intellectuals were the ones doing the “scholarly inquiry,” often as students in neighbouring “free” countries or in Western Europe or Russia. Upon their return, they embarked on programs of “patriotic agitation” through the forum of community schools. As will be shown, these patriotic teachers attempted, with varying degrees of success, to inspire the peasant masses, especially impressionable students, many of whom would become teachers themselves and leaders of the subsequent mass movements. Through this process, the teachers imagined their respective nations into existence.⁵

According to Hroch, for a national movement to develop successfully there must be a crisis in the old order to enable the upstart national movements to flourish. He gives the example of the Ottoman Balkans as his “third type” of national movement where:

the national movement acquired a mass character under the old regime and so before the establishment of a civil society or constitutional order. This pattern produced armed insurrections and was central to the lands of the Ottoman Empire in Europe—Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria.⁶

³ Ibid.

⁴ Miroslav Hroch, “From National Movement to Fully-formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe,” *New Left Review* 198 (1993): 6-7.

⁵ Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments, Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 4. The phrase “imagined into existence” comes from Chatterjee’s discussion of Benedict Anderson.

⁶ Ibid., 8.

Macedonia should also be added to this list. Throughout the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire declined and lost territory as it suffered military defeats, loss of territory and financial ruin. The rise of modernism and nationalism in Christian Western Europe made it easier for the patriotic agitators to captivate the imaginations of the peasant populations of Ottoman Macedonia suffering under the increasing tax burdens and gratuitous repression of the Ottoman Empire.

Hroch argues that a national identity cannot simply be created out of nothing by intellectuals as in the “Imagined Communities” theory of Benedict Anderson, nor can national growth be linked directly to stages of industrialization as theorized by Ernest Gellner. In addition to a crisis of the old order, there must be antecedents such as a degree of autonomy, the memory of a time of former independence and the existence of medieval written language from which the “scholarly inquiry” can draw inspiration.⁷

In the case of Macedonia and the Balkans, the *millet* system provided the degree of autonomy for the Christian population. While the Balkan Christians could convert to Islam, there was never a program by the Sublime Porte⁸ to homogenize its European empire. As churches were permitted to exist, mediaeval and ancient texts in Slavonic, Greek and other languages were carefully preserved. Thus activists doing “scholarly inquiry” could use the old texts to adapt modern print language based on current vernacular. Furthermore, the memory of past freedom could further inspire inquiring national imaginations and could provide popular reference points for agitators to exploit.

While Hroch is critical of Anderson and Gellner, both authors have made valuable contributions to theory on nationalism that can apply here. Anderson does make the point that “nationalisms of all varieties cannot be understood without reflecting on the older political forms out of which they emerged.”⁹ The “imagined communities” theory can help to explain how patriotic agitators were able to expand on antecedents to build a national consciousness. Likewise, Gellner’s work on transitions to nationalism need not be linked solely to actual modern industrialization but to the desire for modern

⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁸ The central authority of the Ottoman Empire was known as the Sublime Porte or, commonly, as “the Porte.”

⁹ Benedict Anderson, “Western Nationalism and Eastern Nationalism, Is there a difference that matters?” *New Left Review* 9 (2001): 33.

industrialization. Dressed in suits and toting textbooks, the agitating teachers sought to emulate the industrial West. In the national competition to win the hearts, minds and tongues of Ottoman Macedonia, the dream was, for most, to create a modern industrial state. As Gellner argues, nationalism does not impose homogeneity, rather, homogeneity is imposed by the objective of fulfilling the dream of a modern state.¹⁰ It was a modern European state that the teachers dreamed of building. The commitment to the principle of nationality by influential, western liberals at mid century legitimized and assisted the campaigns of the Balkan nationalists.

This thesis is a thematic study of the role of education in the initiation and dissemination of nationalism in the southern Balkans and Macedonia. In order to examine the significance of education, a number of topics will be discussed, most notably: the structure of the Ottoman state, education systems, ideological factors, the role of external states and institutions, and the role of individual agents. While the national struggle in the southern Balkans became known as the “Macedonian Question” after 1878, the contest for Macedonia dates back into the early nineteenth century and is tied to the histories of the other Balkan states. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the role education played in the region to understand the intense educational competition for Macedonia in the latter nineteenth century.

Chapter I, “The Making of National Dreams,” provides background on the Ottoman Empire and examines the role education played in the national movements in Serbia, Greece and in the reform movement in the Ottoman Empire. Greek independence and the “principle of nationality” in Western Europe were significant in influencing other “submerged” populations living under the dynastic “yokes” of old empires. By mid century, nationalism was set to transform the map of Europe. Unfortunately, rival national visions often overlapped—especially in Macedonia—and no amount of reform, however well-meaning, could arrest the march of nationalism in the Balkans.

Chapter II, “School Settings,” examines developments in Bulgaria and Macedonia through the mid-nineteenth century up to 1878. Complementary reforms and new teaching techniques designed to educate large classes of students aided the Bulgarian organizers, who were inspired by the actions of the Greeks before them. Literary societies

¹⁰ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 39.

played an important role in propagating nationalism in Bulgaria. The reestablishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870 further aided an educated and impatient generation of Bulgarian revolutionaries, who drew sufficient international sympathy to their case to gain political autonomy in 1878.

There was no shortage of “patriotic agitation” going on in Macedonia during this period. Secular Bulgarian language schools were founded in the 1830s and demand for them increased, leading to conflict with the Greek Patriarchate, which had enjoyed a monopoly on education in the region. American Protestants were also setting up schools and developing Bulgarian grammar books during this period. The Ottoman Porte made it easy for the missionaries to operate as the sultans were content to watch their Christian subjects fight amongst themselves. The fights would get much larger after 1878.

Chapter III, “The Education Race,” illustrates how education came to be the principal means employed by neighbouring states to propagate nationalism in the “unredeemed lands” of Ottoman Macedonia. Bulgarian territorial gains in Macedonia granted by the Treaty of San Stefano were reversed by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, putting Macedonia back into the Ottoman Empire. The Bulgarians opted for a policy of “peaceful penetration,” whereby Macedonia would be flooded with teachers and priests under the banner of the Bulgarian Exarchate. This was to be done in accordance with the Ottoman regulations, but with the goal of spreading Bulgarian nationalism.¹¹ The Greeks reacted by creating their own literary societies and funding Greek schools in Macedonia. Serbia and Romania also got involved, sending teachers and setting up schools of their own where they felt they could find receptive audiences. Though they played lesser roles, Jews, Albanians and Protestants also participated in the educational competition to win converts in Macedonia. This chapter also discusses the quality and nature of the education that was offered.

Chapter IV, “IMRO: A Product of Education,” focuses on IMRO (The Internal Macedonian Revolution Organization), which was a consequence of the national struggle in Macedonia. IMRO was founded by Macedonian-born Bulgarian teachers who had gone through their own “scholarly inquiry” during their educations in Bulgaria and Europe. Their relation with Bulgaria was complex, but one wing of IMRO adhered to the

¹¹ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453* (New York: New York University Press, 1958), 519.

goal of an autonomous Macedonia, which would be secular, if not socialist, in nature. Using their positions as educators, IMRO's founders were able to spread their message and organize the Ilinden Uprising of 1903. However, Great Powers were content to sit back and allow the rebels to be crushed. 1903 marked the beginning of a five year armed struggle as the struggle for Macedonia moved from a classroom contest for hearts and minds to a conflict of terror and guerrilla warfare. This thesis concludes with a final analysis of the outcome of the education race and the degree to which education succeeded in instilling nationalism in the minds of the peasant masses of Macedonia.

Most historical publications on the Balkans are either general histories of the region stretching over periods of centuries or specific histories of a nation or individual. There are relatively few publications that approach topics in Balkan history thematically from the perspective of more than one nation. The history of Macedonia is especially sensitive to this problem since the region has an integral position in the histories of all the states of the southern Balkans. An overabundance of history in the confines of limited geography has resulted in several polemical works in Balkan and Western languages designed to legitimize long-standing irredentist claims to Macedonia. Matters have been further complicated by the emergence of (Slavic) Macedonian national historiography since the Second World War. The recurrence of national questions and security issues in the wake of the dissolution of Socialist Yugoslavia in 1991 has demonstrated that Macedonia's history still has the power to stir up national passions. Nevertheless, the 1990s also produced several groundbreaking revisionist examinations of the region's past.

The history of education and its role in the Balkan national movements has been identified and discussed in several sources. However, education is usually mentioned as one of many topics in the histories of nations or topics, such as the Macedonian Question. Education gets due attention in biographies of teacher-revolutionaries, but many of these works, while highly credible, are written from a national perspective. Likewise, articles on educational movements usually examine the topic from the perspective of one nation.

From this considerable historiography a few sources stand out for their discussion of the significance of education in nineteenth century Macedonia. Duncan Perry's *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movement, 1893-1903* provides a

comprehensive history of the emergence of the Internal Macedonian Revolution Organization (IMRO). Mercia MacDermott's biographies of IMRO leaders Gotse Delchev and Yane Sandanski offer valuable insight into some of the day to day running of Exarchate schools in the 1890s and how IMRO organized itself through the school network. Nadine Lange-Akund's *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908* chronicles the transition to violent struggle at the turn of the century. Vemund Aarbakke's *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia, 1870-1913*, an unpublished thesis since 1992, should receive more recognition after its publication in 2003. Synthesizing several Balkan language histories, the work provides an insightful overview of the events and themes of the Macedonian Question, including education. I have found his discussion of the events in pre-1870 Veles of particular interest as well as his description of the main parties in the education race. As this thesis brings in sources not used by Aarbakke and approaches education thematically over a long time period, I believe the two works complement one another well. Two other secondary sources that deserve special note are Keith Brown's *The Past in Question, Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* and Anastasia Karakasidou's *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood, Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990*. Both works use a mixture of archival and oral history to reassess the past and both illustrate the role of education in spreading nationalism at the local level during Ottoman rule.

While synthesizing secondary sources of various perspectives and methodologies, this thesis also consults the memoirs of British and American writers who journeyed to Ottoman Macedonia in the nineteenth century. These works by Victorian travellers, aid workers, journalists and diplomats are of special value to this thesis since these writers were often in contact with local teachers.¹² These encounters offer insight into the running of schools, the value of education and the often very political nature of the teaching profession in Macedonia. The volume of memoirs increased after the turn of the twentieth century with the escalation of violence in Macedonia. Articles from the *London Times* have also been used here since Macedonia received frequent coverage in the latter nineteenth century as one of the main theatres of the "Eastern Question."

¹² Teachers were the sole intelligentsia in many places and often the only ones who might speak a Western language or two. They were also likely to be politically active.

Admittedly, these memoirs and reports have limitations as sources. As discussed by Keith Brown and Maria Todorova, these Victorian writers exhibit “Balkanism” as their counterparts who wrote on the Middle East display Orientalism in their works. That is, the writers exhibit a tendency to nationalize the diversity of Macedonia and view the “ever-changing kaleidoscopic pageantry”¹³ before them as a confounding problem.¹⁴ Moreover, most cannot be considered neutral observers as most writers favoured a particular national group. Nevertheless, some of these writers spent considerable time in the region and were proficient in one or more of the Balkan languages. The fact that books by H.N. Brailsford, Edith Durham, George Abbott and Frederick Moore are widely cited by a diverse range of historians is testament to the value of these sources. What is more, many Balkan sources on the sensitive topic of education and nationalism offer little in way of objectivity. Given the chaos of the times and the high stakes of the Macedonian dispute, this is to be expected. Official reports and statistics were invariably empirically designed or adjusted to maximize a given nation’s legitimacy in Macedonia. Furthermore, many nationalistic teachers looked on the medley of identities and languages in Macedonia with disdain and could be said to be guilty of the same “Balkanism” exhibited by the Victorian visitors. Study of this topic is further complicated by a dearth of documents from the contested people: the peasants of Macedonia. Most peasants were illiterate and few of those who could read and write kept any written records. The genuine sentiments of the average peasant in Ottoman Macedonia are difficult to ascertain with absolute certainty. As summarized by Vassilis Gounaris and Iakovos Mihailidis:

We know a lot about violence, murder, and harassment in their daily lives but only a few things about their ability to coexist with each other. This shortage of specific sources seems in the end to be identical with the very essence to the Macedonian Question: politics and ideologies in Macedonia were mostly calculated from outside the region, moved and changed faster than the local society could follow, and were always manipulated from the top. How, then, can we expect a history of the Macedonian Question from below?¹⁵

¹³ A.J. Mann, *The Salonika Front* (A&C Black and Co., 1920), 13.

¹⁴ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question, Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 58; Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 118-121.

¹⁵ Vassilis Gounaris and Iakovos Mihailidis, “The Pen and the Sword: Reviewing the Historiography of the Macedonian Question,” in *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics*, ed. Victor Roudometof, 127 (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2000).

With this lack of indisputably credible sources, historians are left to confront topics with sources that often contradict one another regarding Macedonia since it is a matter of national interest for the regional states. There is, as Gounaris and Mihailidis point out, “abundant literature to support any point of view.”¹⁶ Thus, the task of the polemicist is easy while critical historians face potentially complex challenges. However, as much of the revisionist history of the past fifteen years has shown, this is not an impossible task. By consulting different national histories, non-Balkan sources and being open to the use of oral history and local knowledge of the past, a more complete picture of Macedonia’s past emerges.

Terminology

Some of the terminology used here requires preliminary explanation. Non English language terms appear in this text in italics and are accompanied in their first mention by a translation or explanation. Cities, towns and geographical features appear in their present forms, meaning most places in the south are in Greek while those further upriver appear in their Slavic form. For consistency, common spellings have been used without accents. In quoted portions of text, some places may appear in another language. Notably, Thessaloniki was often referred to as Salonica in the nineteenth century. Likewise, Bitola was known primarily by its Greek name, Monastir, and just north of Thessaloniki, Kilkis was more often called Kukush, its Slavic name.

The branches and offices of the Orthodox Church can be confused at times. The Ecumenical Patriarchate is the Greek Orthodox Church, led by the patriarch of the given time and based in Constantinople. As Macedonia was under Ottoman control and education was in the hands of the religious authorities, the Patriarchate enjoyed a near monopoly on education in Macedonia for the first seventy years of the nineteenth century. Greek schools, as they are sometimes referred to, were the Patriarchate’s schools, although toward the end of the nineteenth century they increasingly received resources and teachers from the Greek state. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church, known as the Exarchate and headed by the Exarch, was re-established in 1870 by order of the

Ottoman Sultan. Exarchate schools were Bulgarian schools, and while most teachers and resources came from Bulgarian Principality after 1878, the schools were still administered by the Exarchate in Constantinople.

Finally, Macedonia is referred to here in its geographic context. During the period covering my thesis, Macedonia was part of the Ottoman Empire, as it had been since the late fourteenth century.

¹⁶ Ibid., 125.

Chapter I: The Making of National Dreams

The Land of Many Histories

For millennia the Balkans have been the crossroads of empires. This peninsula has been an eternally contested borderland, where the peoples of Central Europe, Eastern Europe and Asia Minor have extended their influences and left their marks time and again, century after century, civilization after civilization. At the centre of this crossroads is Macedonia.

Macedonia, with its imposing mountain ranges, fertile valleys and a stretch of coast on the Aegean Sea, would be an attractive land of plenty were it not cursed by its location. Geographic Macedonia¹ extends along the Aegean coast from Mt. Olympus to the mouth of the Nestos River. The Sar, Osgovski and Rila Mountains provide a natural, northern border. To the west, the barrier of the Sar Mountains curves southwards to Lake Ohrid and Lake Prespa before the Pindus Mountains take over. To the east, the Rhodope Mountains mark the eastern border in the hinterland above the Nestos. Four river systems flow from Macedonia's mountains to the Aegean. The most important of these is the Vardar, which originates in the Sar Mountains and flows north before hooking south through the centre of the territory to the Aegean Sea. Macedonia's two largest population centres—Skopje and Thessaloniki—sit at either end of the Vardar's north south axis. Thessaloniki is the great port with shipping connections to all points in the Eastern Mediterranean. Skopje is the eternal way station. Its old *Caravansary* was a rest stop for generations of travellers; its streets are still dotted with import—export offices. Just beyond the hills north of Skopje, the Morava River cuts northward to the Danube and Central Europe. East of Thessaloniki the Struma River opens a passage through the mountains to central Bulgaria. West of the port city, the Aliakmon River shows the way

¹ See map Appendix. Geographic Macedonia has an area of about 67,000 square kilometers. I

to mountain passes where routes lead to the Ionian Sea. Farther north, the Black Drim drains away from Lake Ohrid north and then west, emptying into the Adriatic within sight of the Italian Peninsula.

Macedonia forms a natural bridge between Occident and Orient that has been frequently traversed and often contested. Time made Macedonia into “a veritable museum of all the Balkan peoples,”² a living mosaic of peoples who rubbed shoulders with one another yet still maintained very separate identities. The location of this living “Salade Macedonie” has condemned its inhabitants to endemic banditry and occupations and raids by invading armies. Ten different armies occupied Skopje in the twentieth century alone.³

The centuries have woven Macedonia into the histories of several nations. Ancient Hellenic tribes and Illyrians were present as the Kings of Macedon built their empire in the fourth century BC. The Romans overran Macedonia in the second century BC and constructed a network of roads and the cities of Scupi and Stobi on the Vardar corridor. Slavs came to Macedonia in the sixth century, followed by Vlachs. Then Byzantium established its reign over the territory, dotting the territory with Orthodox Churches. An uprising centred around Ohrid in the eleventh century saw the short reign of Kings Simeon and Samuel. Whether this kingdom was Bulgarian or uniquely Macedonian is disputed by national historians. Regardless, the Byzantines crushed the upstart kingdom in 1016. A little later medieval Serbia enveloped most of Macedonia with Skopje serving as its capital. During this period, Thessaloniki, the largest city in Macedonia and the second city of Byzantium, was sacked first by Normans and later by Vikings before Venice occupied the city for a time. The Ottoman Empire conquered the entire territory in the latter fourteenth century, remaining in control of Macedonia until the early twentieth century. Under the Ottomans, Islam spread into Macedonia, yet it was

² Ferdinand Schevill, *The Balkan Peninsula and the Near East. A History from the Earliest Time to the Present Day* (London: G. Bell, 1922), 432.

³ The Ottomans controlled Skopje until 1912. An Albanian guerrilla force briefly occupied the city before the Serbian army took it over in the First Balkan War of 1912. Bulgaria controlled Skopje during the First World War before the city was taken by the French in 1918. Royalist Yugoslavia exerted authority during the inter-war era until swept aside by the Nazi Wehrmacht. Tito's Yugoslav Partisans liberated the city from Axis Bulgarian forces in 1944. The Yugoslavs left in 1991 following the independence of the Republic of Macedonia. NATO set up shop in Skopje in 1999, establishing a large base and commandeering national air space for their campaign against Milosevic's Yugoslavia regardless of whether the locals approved or not.

not forced upon the population. Christians were tolerated and Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition were welcomed; large numbers of them settled in Thessaloniki. Consequently, a multicultural mosaic of people flourished in Macedonia during the glory days of the theocratic Ottoman Empire. However, with the empire in steady decline in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Macedonia was sized up for incorporation by other Balkan states as they respectively gained autonomy and eventually independence. Effectively, Macedonia was an integral element of several Balkan nations and it became part of multiple national dreams. For dreamers and pragmatists alike, it was far too big a prize to ignore.

Education in the Time of Ottoman Rule

Through the centuries of Ottoman rule, Macedonia remained predominantly populated by Slavs of the Orthodox Christian faith. Most were peasants, residing in villages and working small plots of land. After taking all of the Southern Balkans and finally overwhelming the defenders of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottoman authorities imposed a theocratic administration across the conquered lands. All power and privilege was exclusively in the hands of the Muslims. Christians and Jews—fellow “People of the Book”—were treated as second class citizens, yet they were not persecuted, forced to migrate or assimilated. Indeed, far from being the beginning of a “Dark Age” in the Balkans, the first century following Ottoman conquest brought years of peace and stability for the Christians of Macedonia and the Southern Balkans. While most of Europe was embroiled in civil and religious wars, the Ottoman Empire was a haven of multicultural tolerance. Still, the empire’s non-Muslims had to submit to Islamic dominance. Christians could not carry weapons, ride horses nor build their houses or churches higher than Muslims houses and mosques. Christian families were also obliged to surrender their fourth born son for a lifetime of military service in the Sultan’s Janissary Corps and might be required to give a daughter to an official’s harem. In spite of these harsh impositions, Ottoman Christians were otherwise left alone and in peace provided they obeyed the law. The Ecumenical Patriarchate (Greek Orthodox Church) flourished under the conditions of Ottoman rule.

One of the first acts of Sultan Mohammed II⁴ was to appoint a Greek monk by the name of George Scholarios to the Ecumenical Patriarchal throne after the conquest of Constantinople.⁵ Subsequently, the Ecumenical Patriarchate was given authority over the majority the Orthodox Christians of the empire and all of those living in the Balkans. The Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Ottoman Porte would enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship until 1821. With the might of the then powerful Ottomans behind them, the Patriarchate could consolidate its influence over the Orthodox Churches of the Empire and feel very secure in resisting the influences of the Catholic Church. In turn, the Porte had added insurance that its Christians would be kept in line by the Ecumenical Patriarchate and, therefore, would be less tempted to fall into Rome's orbit. This was made possible by the Ottoman Empire's *millet* system of social administration that divided the population into administrative units according to religious affiliation. Muslims had supremacy, but Jews and Christians were allowed to administer their community affairs, including education. From the 1760s until 1870, the Ecumenical Patriarchate had exclusive control over the education of the Empire's Balkan Christians.⁶

However, the Ecumenical Patriarchate did little to promote education despite having the relative freedom to educate as it pleased. It was content to simply conserve the theocratic order of the Byzantine Empire, in which education had been the reserve of the wealthy and the church. Hence, Ottoman conquest preserved the Byzantine order of education. It is a great myth that cultural traditions and languages were kept alive in clandestine classrooms in church basements during Ottoman rule.⁷ In fact, they were kept alive by the structure of the *millet* system and official apathy. The Ottoman Ministry of Education funded state schools and regulated private schools opened by individuals, but the more common *millet* or community schools, were the left to the direction of the

⁴ Mohammed II is known as 'Mohammed the Conqueror' in Ottoman Turkish.

⁵ Scholarios was a conservative who swore: "Better the sword of the Turk than the beard of the Frank." The Orthodox hatred of Catholicism steamed from the Great Schism of 1054, the barbarity of the Four Crusade and Venetian dominance of Mediterranean trade.

⁶ The Ecumenical Patriarchate controlled the '*Rumi-i-millet*' consisting of Greek, Slav and Vlach speaking Orthodox subjects of the Ottoman Empire. Other millets included the Muslims, Armenian Orthodox and the Jews. This administrative preservation of the Empire's diversity proved to be advantageous to the future generations seeking to teach nationalism.

⁷ Andre Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars*, 78.

religious authorities.⁸ The Ottoman authorities were largely indifferent to Christian education and left the matter to the Patriarchate. Any decline in education after conquest was the fault of the Patriarchate. Most levels of Christian society had little interest in education. Thus, the educational decline was not the product of Ottoman abuse but “a result of the monopolization of education by the Church and the reluctance of most communities to support a scholastic system.”⁹ Education remained mostly ecclesiastical. As explained by Bulgarian diplomat and historian Stephan Panaretoff:

Schools and education were the last thing that the people thought of or cared for. Book learning was considered appropriate only for the clergy, and even among them it was of the most rudimentary kind. Modern conceptions of education have undergone a great change among the people of the Near East, but it was not so very long ago that the saying current among the people: “I do not intend to make a priest out of him,” was considered a sufficient excuse for parents not to send their boys to school.¹⁰

Until the nineteenth century, Christian education throughout most of the Ottoman domains was almost all in Greek, situated in towns and monasteries and generally very ecclesiastical. However, a few schools could still maintain high standards and teach the philosophy and mathematics of the ancient Greeks: like the Patriarchal School in Constantinople.¹¹ The first school in Macedonia created after the reforming measures of the Synodal Decree of 1593 was established in Kastoria in 1614.¹² More Greek schools were established in larger centres across Macedonia after 1650. Still, education, particularly education of any quality, was not widely available to the majority of the Slavic peasants of the countryside.

Where it existed, the quality of most elementary classrooms and pedagogy was extremely low. There was typically no fixed school building in a community and the job of teaching was ordinarily left to priests and monks. These designated teachers would often instruct their students intermittently while attending to other tasks.¹³ In many cases, teachers and students were without benches and sat on the floor on skins or on small

⁸ Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995), 51. “To open a community school there had to be at least thirty households of the relevant community.”

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Stephan Panaretoff, *Near Eastern Affairs and Conditions* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1922), 71-72.

¹¹ Andre Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars*, 78.

¹² M.B. Sakellariou, (General Editor) *Greek Lands and History. Macedonia 4,000 Years of Greek History and Civilization* (Athens: Ekdotike Athens S.A. 1983), 406.

carpets the pupils brought from home.¹⁴ There were few if any textbooks. Untrained teachers taught as they liked; this usually meant rote learning. Discipline was harsh and graduation simply came when the given teacher had taught the student everything he knew.¹⁵ One school had such ineffective teachers that the students were unable to remember anything they had learned in the previous year and had to repeat the same material several years in succession.¹⁶ If not from the priesthood, teachers were drawn from the ranks of the old or crippled since such people could not do heavy work and thus served no other useful purpose.¹⁷ In summarizing the limitations of secular learning, Panaretoff explains that:

Very few of the pupils acquire the art of writing, while of secular learning some were taught the most rudimentary elements of arithmetic, not venturing beyond addition and subtraction. History, geography, not to mention any higher studies, were ignored to such a degree that even high ecclesiastics had a poor knowledge of them.¹⁸

Greek dominance in control of all forms of education gave Hellenism the chance to dominate Macedonia, especially after the Porte closed the Bulgarian and Serbian Patriarchates in 1766 and 1767. However, widespread Hellenization did not take place in Macedonia. The Greek schools welcomed some Slavic students whose families were attracted by the high social standing of a Greek education.¹⁹ Like marrying a daughter into a Greek family, a Greek education was particularly desirable for upwardly mobile Slavic families, and thus served as means of Hellenizing Slavs.²⁰ Still, the number of

¹³ Stephan Panaretoff, *Near Eastern Affairs and Conditions*, 75.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁷ Mercia MacDermott, *A History of Bulgaria 1393—1885* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1962), 117.

¹⁸ Stephan Panaretoff, *Near Eastern Affairs and Conditions*, 73.

¹⁹ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1993), 19. Greek schools continued to attract Slavic student for this reason even after the establishment of Slavic language schools in Macedonia.

²⁰ Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood. Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia 1870-1990*, 74. The educated and the commercial elites spoke Greek. By learning Greek, one could gain access to the privileged class and, to an extent, effectively become Greek. There existed a cultural division of labour where Muslims ruled and performed administrative tasks, Greeks controlled commerce and the church and the majority population of Slavic peasants toiled in the fields. The structure of Ottoman society reinforced these roles and adjectives of nationality came to denote one's occupation. A Slav was assumed to be a peasant, a Greek was a learned man or a merchant, a Vlach was a shepherd, a Turk a lawyer, landowner or tax collector.

Slavic children attending Greek schools was low and the Greek administrators made no attempt to attract or force Slavic children to attend Greek schools.²¹ They were content with the status quo, so the means and will to increase the number of Greek schools simply did not exist. Hellenizing efforts by the emerging kingdom of Greece after independence in 1831 were limited by lack of funds. During the upheavals of the Greek War of Independence of 1821 to 1827, most education and intellectual life came to a “virtual standstill.”²² The Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople was also content to rest on its supremacy as it had been doing since the days after Ottoman conquest,²³ especially with revolutionary ideas coming from Paris, which it despised as heresy.

With no concerted Greek initiative, the cultural division of labour in Macedonia continued with the Slavic villagers retaining their mother tongue. Bulgarian specialist R.J. Crampton credits this same phenomenon for sustaining Bulgarian (and indeed all Slavic, Albanian and Romanian) language and culture through the period of occupation:

The language survived primarily because most Bulgarians lived in their small, isolated and usually ethnically homogenous villages. In such communities there was no need to adopt Greek for everyday economic transaction, or to use Turkish when dealing with government officials. The villages therefore preserved the Bulgarian language and with it Bulgarian names, Bulgarian folk tales and legends, Bulgarian forms of family organization and Bulgarian festivals and holidays.²⁴

The very nature of Ottoman Theocracy with its *millet* system, coupled with a Greek Patriarchate that had a very limited interest in furthering the education of the Christian population, allowed the religion, language, and custom of the Balkan Christians to survive. However, as the Ottomans retreated, peace and prosperity waned. The leaders of Balkan national movements urged emulation of the powerful states of Christian Europe. They also appealed to their audiences to take pride in their religion, language, customs and the glory of their ancestors as they strove for liberation from Ottoman rule.

²¹ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1493*, (New York: New York University Press, 1958), 518. The majority of the peasant masses continued to toil in the fields and retain their Slavic dialects.

²² M.B. Sakellariou, (General Editor) *Greek Lands and History. Macedonia 4,000 Years of Greek History and Civilization*, 493.

²³ Andre Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars*, 78.

²⁴ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 89.

The Declining Empire

The Ottoman Empire's zenith in the sixteenth century coincided with the rise of Western Europe. As the Ottomans consolidated their hold on the Balkans, the Europeans were exploiting vast sources of New World wealth. In addition, European explorers established new trade routes that allowed Western Europeans to bypass Mediterranean middle men. Losses in customs revenues prompted the Ottomans to unsuccessfully confront the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. Naval defeats were followed by the appearance of European trade colonies in the Middle East, maintained by powerful European fleets. By the seventeenth century, the Europeans controlled several trade centres in Asia vital to Ottoman commercial interests. Furthermore, the European colonies in Asia, Africa and the Americas were soon producing crops such as sugar and coffee that had formerly been handled by the Ottoman Empire. Further military defeats would ensure the sultans would remain on the outside looking in as Western Europe amassed its spoils.²⁵

Any chance of establishing control over the Mediterranean was dashed after the defeat of the Ottoman fleet at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. The Hapsburgs, long the nemesis of Ottoman commanders and Orthodox priests, won a decisive victory. Consequently, the Ottoman Empire declined as a naval power. Venice, France and Great Britain would all make their presence felt in the Eastern Mediterranean in subsequent centuries. Ottoman expansion on land continued into the seventeenth century with the Empire taking control of Hungary, parts of Southern Russian and laying siege to Vienna on three occasions. In 1683, the final siege of Vienna was lifted and the Ottoman forces decisively routed. This debacle was followed by a series of defeats which put an end to the Ottoman threat to Central Europe. In 1699 the Ottoman Empire and the Holy League negotiated the Treaty of Karlowitz in which the Ottomans acknowledged defeat and a permanent loss of territory as opposed to a temporary withdrawal. The balance of power had decisively shifted in Europe's favour. The Ottoman Empire would go from being Europe's terror to its sick man.

²⁵ Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong? The Clash Between Islam and Modernity in the Middle East* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2003), 13-15.

Territorial regression meant an increased burden on the peasants in the eighteenth century. Expansion had not only procured more wealth, it also allowed sultans to give land as an incentive to their soldiers. With fewer incentives to campaign for the Sultan, *pashas* (regional rulers) and organizations such as the Janissary Corps found new means to secure their own interests. For peasants, this meant an increased tax burden and being subject to extortion by local administrators and bandits.

For Greek merchants, however, the second half of the eighteenth century brought an era of increased prosperity. Greek merchants had already amassed fortunes controlling the salt trade and the Black Sea wheat trade.²⁶ Their profits increased as the successive wars between the European powers created more demands for raw materials.²⁷ During the Napoleonic Wars, with the Europeans devoting most of their resources to fighting, Greek merchants had the run of Mediterranean commerce and were supplying contraband goods to Great Britain. The Greeks' geography, Christianity and, most of all, their knowledge of Western European languages helped them gain the confidence of European business clients. The Greeks also enjoyed a measure of foreign protection. Since the fourteenth century, the Sultan had granted special "capitulations" to foreign nationals residing in the Empire. The capitulations allowed foreigners exemption from taxation as well as the civil and criminal laws of the Ottoman Empire.²⁸ In time, many non-Muslims in the Empire obtained tax exemption certificates (*berats*), depriving the Porte of revenue from its most prosperous subjects.²⁹ The Treaty of Kucuk Kaynarca in 1774 gave the Russian government the right to make representations to the Porte on behalf of the Orthodox Church, which the Russians interpreted to mean on behalf of the population of the Ottoman Empire.³⁰ This provided the Greek merchants with a favoured status that gave

²⁶ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 270.

²⁷ Resat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy—The Nineteenth Century* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 18. Greek merchants also benefited from increased grain prices during this period.

²⁸ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700—1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). 77.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 78. Due to European opposition, the Ottomans were unable to even suspend of the capitulation laws until the First World War.

³⁰ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 192. According to Stavrianos, the treaty was a supreme diplomatic blunder on the part of the Ottomans. In giving the Russians the right to protect the religious freedom of the Orthodox subjects of the Empire the Russians had "a standing pretext for diplomatic intervention or for military aggression."

them an advantage over their competitors.³¹ Greek merchants were travelling and trading far and wide, even as far as the North America, and were gaining increased exposure to the practices and ideologies that were shaping the West. By exporting goods and importing knowledge, they came to realize the value of western education and acquired the financial means to send their children away to European universities. As the nineteenth century dawned, those exposed to western ideas and learning would challenge the order of the Empire.

In addition to the profits of trade, the Greeks benefited from increased privileges in the eighteenth century after the Slavs fell out of favour with the Porte for repeatedly siding with invading armies. The elite class of “Phanariot” Greeks in Constantinople had accrued wealth and knowledge through trade which they used to gain positions of power and influence in the Patriarchate and the Ottoman bureaucracy. Sultans came to rely on the Phanariots’ knowledge of finance and foreign languages. Several Phanariots rose to high levels in the Ottoman government as their languages and negotiation skills were needed in treaty talks with the European powers.³² While they behaved and dressed like sultans and pashas, the Phanariots contributed their wealth to the rise in Greek letters and education. This embrace of western education brought the Phanariots into conflict with the Patriarchate, which reacted with caution to the European Enlightenment and with hysteria to the French Revolution.³³ Nevertheless, many Phanariots sympathized with the emerging secular, nationalist movement led by those influenced by the West. These Phanariots took great pride in knowing they were the heirs of the classical past that inspired contemporary European thought.³⁴ Phanariots who administered territory could promote western education as they pleased.

Beyond the streets of the Phanar district of Constantinople, the Phanariots came to control the Romanian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. While the principalities were under the Sultan’s authority, the ruling princes or “hospodars” were given complete autonomy in return for the payment of a tribute. The election of hospodars by the nobles

³¹ Resat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, 29.

³² L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 271. Most noteworthy of these was Alexander Mavrokordatos who negotiated the Treaty of Karlowitz.

³³ Panayotis Alexandrou Papachristou, “The Three Faces of the Phanariots: An Inquiry into the Role and Motives of the Greek Nobility under Ottoman Rule, 1683-1821,” (M.A. thesis, Simon Fraser University, 1992). 105.

of the respective principalities became a revolving door of corruption through which successive hospodars extorted much from the beleaguered peasants. When the Russian armies of Peter the Great approached in 1711, the hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia both declared themselves for the Russian monarch. After the Russians departed, the Porte decreed that all hospodars would from then on be Phanariots appointed directly by the Porte. While the Phanariot hospodars asserted Ottoman authority over the principalities, they enjoyed considerable autonomy, which enabled them to reform the principalities if they chose. A Phanariot hospodar abolished serfdom in the principalities by 1750.³⁵ Importantly, Greek culture flourished under Phanariot administration with Greek becoming the preferred language of the nobles. During the last three decades of the eighteenth century, Phanariot administrators established new schools that emphasised science, rationalism and western languages.³⁶ Greek merchants around the Black Sea profited from Greek prestige and power in the principalities. They also benefited from Phanariot influence in the Constantinople and religious connections with Russia. The Greek communities of the Black Sea ports achieved substantial prosperity. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Greek revolutionary society—*Philiki Hetaria*—was founded in the Black Sea port of Odessa in 1814.

The Romanian principalities may have had the greatest autonomy in the Empire, but other parts of the empire enjoyed degrees of independence as well. The mountain Kingdom of Montenegro realized independence in 1799. Transylvania, like Moldavia and Wallachia, had autonomous status until it was given to the Habsburgs under the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. Due to their fierce resistance, the Ghegs of the Northern Albanian highlands were largely left to themselves. Additionally, several villages, islands and cities such as Athens and Ragusa (Dubrovnik) were allowed self-government in return for supplying the Porte with goods or men. In short, many of the Balkan Christians had become used to various levels of independence as well as relative peace and prosperity by the end of the eighteenth century. However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century,

³⁴ Ibid., 109.

³⁵ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 343.

³⁶ Panayotis Alexandrou Papachristou, "The Three Faces of the Phanariots," 104. The Phanariot rulers in the Romanian Principalities could ensure such schools and faculty could function without interference.

the situation in the Ottoman Balkans became increasingly fluid and the ideas and actions of revolutionary Europe were gaining appeal.

Even in the backwaters of Macedonia, consumer goods trickled in and western ideas caught the imaginations of some of the residents. Merchants, workers and those who had volunteered in European armies brought back goods, gifts and stories of an enlightened and revolutionary Europe. The English Traveller Edmund Spencer noticed this phenomenon while en route to Skopje in 1850:

When it is remembered that we are travelling in a country destitute of roads, and where every article of merchandize is transported on the backs of beasts of burden, and that consequently many thousands of intelligent men are employed in the traffic, it is easy to imagine the facilities afforded them for disseminating their views and opinions, for sowing the seeds of a more liberal and elevated tone of feeling among the population of the remote towns and villages.³⁷

Spencer noticed that the men who transported goods and travellers around the Balkans (*kiraidji*) could speak “a *patois* composed of Slavonian and Greek,”³⁸ which enabled them to communicate with one another. Use of such a hybrid language had evolved in Macedonia in particular as traders traversed the peninsula time and again. Historians and anthropologists have noted the use of a mixed tongue of Balkan language prevailing amongst older generations even to the present day in Geographic Macedonia in spite of the standardizing efforts of respective national education curriculums.³⁹ One can still find people involved in trade and transportation in the Southern Balkans who, despite very little formal education, can negotiate business deals in several Balkan languages. Today as in years past, such men can learn while they travel and communicate ideas back to their communities.

Well-travelled Greek traders were not the only ones in contact with Christian Europe. During his extensive travels around Northern Greece in 1805, William Martin Leake found several adults in the backwaters of Macedonia who had had considerable

³⁷ Edmund Spencer ESQ, *Travels in European Turkey in 1850, Through Bosnia, Servia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Thrace, Albania and Epirus; With a Visit to Greece and the Ionian Isles and a Homeward Tour Through Hungary and the Slavonian Provinces of Austria on the Lower Danube. Volume II* (London: Colburn and Co, 1851), 24.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 22. Hybrid dialects and bilingualism were quite common amongst Balkan travellers and traders of this era.

³⁹ See Jane Cowan *Dance and the Body Politic in Northern Greece* and Anastasia Karakasidou *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood. Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia 1870-1990*.

contact with the West. Leake noted that the Greek merchants of Serres carried out an extensive cotton trade with Vienna.⁴⁰ He found that most of the monks of the St. Athanasius monastery near Mount Olympus were “absent on their usual tours of begging, which sometimes carry them as far as Germany.”⁴¹ In the town of Siatista, on the Aliakomon River in the shadows of the Pindus Mountains, he found that a large number of the town’s adults had worked or were working in the West. Leake’s description indicates this number was likely greater than or equal to the number of adults with experience working abroad in present day Siatista:

Almost every family in Siatista has one member of it residing as a merchant in Italy, Hungary, Austria, or other parts of Germany, and there are few of the elders who have not spent ten or twelve years of their lives in one of those countries. German is of course very generally spoken, and Italian almost as much.⁴²

Increasingly, people in provincial, Balkan centres were more likely to see Westerners first hand. A growing number of missionaries arrived to save the souls of the people. Physicians and military advisors also appeared to maintain the health and power of the regional elites. Leake noted the presence of a French doctor in Siatista, another who had served Ali Pasha in Ioannina and a French family that was “long settled in Candia.”⁴³ In 1850 Spencer arrived in Bitola and expressed delight at “an unexpected piece of good fortune for the wanderer in Turkey, to find himself thrown among so many intelligent natives of the civilized West.”⁴⁴ From the descriptions of Spencer and Leake, it is evident that even those living in the more remote corners of the Balkans had some exposure to the products and ideologies of revolutionary Europe. The geography of the Balkan Peninsula dictates that its people cannot exist in isolation from the forces swirling around them.

Leake found that the ideas of the French Revolution held particular appeal to the residents of Macedonia. Men from around the Balkans had served in the French armies in Italy. In the town of Korce, Leake found the local Greek clergy in favour of union with Rome and local Muslim and Christian residents alike both wishing for French conquest to

⁴⁰ William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece, Vol. III* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1967), 203.

⁴¹ William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece, Vol. I* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1967), 319.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 307.

⁴³ William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece, Vol. III*, 204.

⁴⁴ Edmund Spencer, ESQ, *Travels in European Turkey in 1850*, 54.

save them from chronic raids by Albanian bandits.⁴⁵ While some prayed for deliverance from outside, there was little impetus by the local population to change their own fate regardless of how much they had been exposed to the ways of the West, much to Leake's frustration.

Leake repeatedly pointed to the disregard of education as the reason for the continued state of stagnation. On his visit to Mount Athos in October of 1806, Leake noted the books of the ancient monastery of Filotheu were "laid aside as useless lumber in a corner above the church, more for amusement than with the hope of finding anything valuable."⁴⁶ Three days later at the Monastery of Vatopedhi, Leake discovered the once thriving school at the monastery standing empty:

The ignorant are generally persecutors of knowledge: the school was viewed with jealous eyes by all the vulgar here of caloyers, and there were other objections to the Holy Peninsula which, combined with the former, proved at last the ruin of the school.⁴⁷

Leake saw education as the key to Hellenic enlightenment, but from his travels in Macedonia he repeatedly despaired at the apathy of the Christians towards education and independent initiative. In Leake's estimation, the Ottoman system and culture had sapped the Christians of the will to pursue education and independence. The following passage on Kastoria encapsulates his views and conclusions:

The travelled men of Kastoria seem not more anxious about education than their fellow-country-men in general: nothing more being taught in the school, which they support here, than the mere rudiments of the ancient language. So powerful is the effect of the Turkish system, that all those who dwell long in the country seem inevitably to feel the effects of this moral atmosphere by a want of energy and an indifference to everything but the vulgar pursuits of life, or their personal safety, which being always in some danger, affords therefore some excuse for their conduct. Even those who return after a long residence in civilized Europe, are seldom tardy in resuming the general feeling, and among other indications of it, make none by the feeblest exertions for the improvement of the rising generation. It is almost entirely up to the Greeks permanently settled in foreign countries and to some of their countrymen in Constantinople, that Greece is indebted for the progress she has made of late years in education, and that progress, therefore, although constant, is slow on the continent of Greece. Few men are to be found here who have any curiosity as to the ancient geography or

⁴⁵ William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece, Vol. I*, 340.

⁴⁶ William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece, Vol. III*, 127.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 132-133.

history of their country; and even the young men who have had the benefit of a European education soon lost their literary taste and acquirements, when they are settled in their native land, where straightened, perhaps, for the means of existence, living under a constant necessity of deceiving their oppressors, and depriving of all instructive conversation, they soon become entirely occupied with the only objects which a government such as the Turkish leaves open to them.⁴⁸

Leake recognized correctly that the Greeks needed their own education to enable any patriotic agitation to be successful, and that it would be up to the Greeks outside mainland Greece to take the initiative. Thanks to the *millet* system, the Greek agitators would have an audience to whom they could state their message. In addition, the break down of order in the Empire brought on by the economic depression following the Napoleonic Wars, provided audiences receptive to their message.

By the eighteenth century, the peasants of the Balkans were harvesting large crops of corn and cotton for lucrative export to Europe, yet they were receiving little dividend for their labour in a state that was increasingly lawless. In preceding centuries, Balkan peasants had enjoyed a more peaceful and prosperous existence due to the *timar* agricultural system. The *timar* system granted them hereditary rights to the land with limitations on the amount their overlords could collect from the harvest. With the coming of corn and cotton, the *chiflik* system was increasingly adopted, giving exclusive ownership to the property owners and condemned the peasants to “virtual serfdom.”⁴⁹ Peasant revolts increased. Growing numbers of men were following the example of the Ghegs of the Albanian highlands and leaving the land for a life of banditry. They had reason to do so. The authorities were engaged in robbery of their own.

Wealthy *ayans* (local nobles) gained power through the eighteenth century, giving them an autonomy that bordered on independence. In order to keep pace with their European opponents, the Porte had ordered the *ayans* to have standing armies of men ready to resist attack. No longer were weapons and fighting men under strict central authority of the Porte. Standing forces of armed men under the *ayans* created strong, rogue regional forces that did not always adhere to the wishes of the Porte. In peacetime,

⁴⁸ William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece, Vol. I*, 331-332.

⁴⁹ L.S. Stavrianos, “The Influence of the West on the Balkans,” in *The Balkans in Transition, Essays on the Development of Balkan Life and Politics since the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Charles and Barbra Jelavich. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 190.

the unemployed *sekban* (regional fighters) troops beset on the rural populations as bandits, taking what they wanted or demanding protection money.⁵⁰ While in the domain of the famous *ayan* Ali Pasha of Ioannina, Leake wrote that the peasants loathed the hefty annual payment the Pasha and his son demanded from every village under their control.

He wrote:

...neither pestilence nor famine are more dreaded by the poor natives than the arrival of those little scraps of coarse paper scrawled with a few Greek characters, and stamped with the well-known little seal which makes *Epris, Thessaly, and Macedonia* tremble.⁵¹

Still, some gave their approval to the Pasha's authority since he gave them protection from bandits.⁵² Interestingly, Leake commented that the Pasha "dares not exercise this kind of oppression in Albania."⁵³ This indicates the martial tradition and culture of banditry many of the Albanians practiced was respected and feared even by the powerful Pasha of Ioannina. Small wonder that more peasants around the Balkans were taking to hills with rifles to start violent traditions of their own. After the turn of the nineteenth century, increasingly embattled, embittered and alienated peasants were becoming more open to the ideological and economic impulses of the West. Indeed, many had little more to lose. Established bands of bandits could easily transform into guerrilla forces if they chose to do so. Agitators with foreign educations were finding receptive audiences. The southern and northern ends of the Balkan Peninsula were about to explode.

The Serbian Uprising

Thanks to the spread of banditry and the cunning of some rather worldly pig merchants, a peasant uprising in the *pashalik* (region) of Belgrade became a national revolution. Repeated Austrian occupations in the eighteenth century had prompted Sultan Selim III to grant more autonomy to the Serbs of the Belgrade *pashalik*. These Ottoman Serbs had repeatedly rejected Hapsburg rule and its inherent Catholicism. They were content under Ottoman control, provided the Sultan's administration was fair. The late

⁵⁰ Resat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, 16.

⁵¹ William Martin Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece, Vol. I*, 309.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 311.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 309.

eighteenth century had been a time of peace and prosperity in the Belgrade *pashalik* under the local governance of Hacı Mustafa, a Selim III loyalist, known as “the mother of the Serbs.” But Selim’s foes were numerous and were about to make their presence felt in the Serbian lands.

Foremost of the Selim’s enemies were the Janissaries. Once the Sultan’s most elite and disciplined troops, the Janissaries had come to symbolize the Empire’s decline for their shameless corruption, reactionary tendencies and abuse of power. In 1801 Janissaries in Belgrade liquidated Hacı Mustafa and exacted their rule on the Serbs, imposing weapons searches, high taxes and the loathed *chiflik* system. For the Serbs, it was too much. Increasing numbers took to the hills and forests to join the swelling ranks of the *hajduks* (bandits). In Constantinople, Selim called on his Christian and Muslim subjects alike to help in ousting the Janissaries from Belgrade. Christians were granted the right to bear arms and joined the Sultan’s ranks to march against the Janissaries.

When the time came in the spring of 1804, the Serb *hajduks* were able to transform into an effective guerrilla force some 30,000 strong. Within months, the Serbs expelled the Janissaries in the name of the Sultan and established control over Ottoman Serbia. However, the Janissaries would soon thwart Selim’s reform program in Constantinople and help bring the reformist Sultan’s reign to an end.⁵⁴ In the Belgrade *pashalik*, the Serbian leadership began calling for more than autonomy.

The leadership of the Serbian revolt came from a wealthy class of pig farmers who had grown rich by feeding the Hapsburg Empire’s considerable appetite for pork. As explained by L.S. Stavrianos:

The pig trade alone brought about 130,000 pounds annually during the years around 1800. It is interesting to note that the two outstanding leaders of the Serbian revolution, Karadjordje and Milosh Obrenovic, were both engaged in this trade. If an upper class may be said to have existed in the *pashalik* at this time it consisted of these enterprising pig dealers.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 219-220. Selim III was the first Sultan to introduce reforms which borrowed from the West as opposed to past reformist Sultans who directed reform efforts at recapturing the glory of Suleiman the Magnificent’s sixteenth century reign. Selim’s key reform was to establish a ‘New Regulations Army’ modeled on European armed forces. This new force was a direct threat to the Janissaries and other conservative factions who eventually forced Selim to abdicate in May of 1808. Selim was murdered two months later.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 238.

In their close relationship with the Hapsburg Empire, many Serbs served in the Austrian army as regulars or as guerrillas behind Ottoman lines during Habsburg Austria's campaigns against the Ottoman Empire in the late eighteenth century. During the Austro-Turkish War of 1788-1791, Serbian *Freicorps* (Free Corps) did the bulk of the fighting for the Austrians.⁵⁶ Service in the Austrian military gave the Serbs valuable training and leadership skills, making it relatively easy for the Serb leaders to transform the *hajduks* into guerrilla units when the fighting broke out in 1804. The Serbian cause was also aided by thousands of Serbs in the Austrian army who left to join the rebels.

The leader of the revolt, Karadjordje (Black George) had himself served with the Austrians in past wars and had become one of the wealthiest men in Serbia through the pig trade. When the Janissaries cut into his profits, he became a *hajduk*. His leadership kept together an often tenuous alliance of local *kazas* (clans) that not only defeated the Janissaries in 1804, but was able to beat back successive attacks by the Ottomans in the coming years. Karadjordje survived thanks to his fighting spirit, tenacity and some cunning and good fortune with international relations. But fortune ran out in 1813 when the Serbs were left without outside support to face a three-pronged attack by Ottoman troops. Karadjordje fled and the Serbs were crushed, but there were more revolts to come.

While it was a peasant uprising, the Serbian Uprising of 1804 had several intellectual roots. The Serbian Orthodox Church—the standard bearer for Serbian language and culture—had been challenged by emerging Serbian intellectuals in the latter eighteenth century. The Porte shut down the Serbian church in 1766 and ecclesiastical authority of the Serbian lands fell to the Greek Patriarchate. This action caused more Serbs to look westward to the emerging Serbian nationalist intellectuals in the Hapsburg Empire. Some merchant families were sending their children to western universities, particularly Protestant schools in Hungary and Germany, where they were exposed to rationalist convictions that they brought home.⁵⁷

The first of the young and restless Serbs was a monk by the name of Dositej Obradovic who travelled as far as England in 1760 and studied for years in Germany.

⁵⁶ Michael Boro Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia, Volume I, 1804-1908* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 23.

Obradovic absorbed Enlightenment ideas and returned to write up his experiences and various essays on secular topics in layman's Serbian, not the old Byzantine Slavonic of the Orthodox scriptures. Termed "intellectual dynamite" by L.S. Stavrianos, Obradovic's advocacy of western thoughts and his call for a Serbian literary language based on the "common dialect" captured the imagination of a small but growing numbers of Serbs. The Greek Patriarchate began to feel its authority was under threat.⁵⁸

Vuk Karadzic was able to make good on Obradovic's dream by publishing a Serbian dictionary and grammar and volumes of Serbia's epic poems. Karadzic spent many years of his life as an exile in Vienna, where he became inspired by the Romantic Movement. His transcriptions of Serbian poems won him admirers in the West and made him a hero to the Serbs. Serbian traders returning from the Austrian lands brought back ideas and books, which fuelled nationalism and increased the desire for literacy and education. Works such as Jovan Rajic's 1768 history of the Slavs and Hristofor Zefarovic's 1741 *Stemmatographia*, a collection of Slavic saints, monarchs and coats of arms, were published in Vienna and became highly influential.⁵⁹ Karadjordje's military coat of arms and the leader's personal seal were derived from the pages of *Stemmatographia*.⁶⁰

At the turn of the nineteenth century, there was a well established Serbian presence in the Hapsburg Empire. Some Serbs had been driven north from their homelands as refugees, while others were drawn to trade and cultural centres like Vienna in search of opportunity.⁶¹ Serbian intellectuals drawn to Vienna had their own "scholarly inquiry" which helped them influence the peasant leadership of the Serb revolution. The intellectuals became a factor after the rebels had consolidated power. Obradovic was minister of education in Karadjordje's government from 1808 to 1811 and oversaw the opening of Serbia's first institute for higher education, the "Great School," in Belgrade.

⁵⁷ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 240. This was somewhat by default. Many Serb students were turned away from Orthodox and Catholic schools in Russia and Austria and subsequently enrolled in Protestant schools in Germany and Hungary.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁵⁹ Tim Judah, *The Serbs. History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 54.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ The Habsburgs allowed large communities of Serbs to settle on the *Krajina* (frontier) on the fringes of present-day Croatia and in Vojvodina north of Belgrade. These same Serbian communities were the scenes of most of the fighting in Croatia during the 1991-1995 war.

Karadjordje supported education, realizing that Serbia needed enlightened minds to survive and rule itself.⁶² By 1813, some forty schools had been established in the Belgrade region.⁶³ Subsequent events left Serbia as an Ottoman vassal in which education was slow to develop.⁶⁴ While the Serbs were on the long road to independence, to the south, Greek intellectuals were plotting a revolution aimed at achieving statehood.

The Greek Revolution

Thanks to the *millet* system and the privileged position of the Patriarchate, the Greek language and culture—in its Byzantine context—had been maintained through the centuries of Ottoman rule. While education had primarily been limited to the ecclesiastical circles, the wisdom of classical Greece was preserved in a few elite schools, and it had been making a comeback in the West before Byzantium's collapse in 1453. Early Renaissance questioning of Christian society had derived from the philosophy of Aristotle and the discovery of many of his lost works in the thirteenth century. This secular concept of society was championed at the universities of Bologna and Padua (Padova). Padua was captured by the Venetians in 1405 and was thus not subject to the Court of Rome and the Inquisition. Therefore, Padua's university was free to admit and employ Orthodox Christians from the Ottoman Empire after Byzantium's fall. As explained by John Campbell and Philip Sherrard:

This not only meant that Padua was able to benefit from the services of the most outstanding Greek scholars of the time—scholars who in many cases had at their disposal sources until then unknown at the University and in western Europe generally; it also meant that what amounted to the whole higher education of Greeks from the fall of Constantinople down to the outbreak of the war of Independence in 1821, and hence some of the most powerful formative influences of the Greek intellectual community mentality during this period were dominated, directly or indirectly, by that same rationalizing and materialistic spirit which increasingly prevailed in the university of Padua itself.⁶⁵

⁶² John K. Cox, *The History of Serbia* (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2002), 41. The Serbs had difficulty funding education since they were continually under attack.

⁶³ Tim Judah, *The Serbs. History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 55,

⁶⁴ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 251. Foreign observers in the 1830s noted Serbia's lack of schools and all civil institutions. They likened most of Serbia to the American frontier.

⁶⁵ John Campbell and Philip Sherrard, *Modern Greece* (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1968), 38-39.

Thanks to the Greek community of Venice, the Greek scholars of Padua were able to get their works published. In 1550, the Republic of Venice permitted schools to be opened in Greek lands under its control. Naturally, these schools were staffed by Greek graduates from Padua.⁶⁶

Theophyllos Corydaleus was one of Padua's most influential graduates. Through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Academy of the Patriarchate in Constantinople came to be staffed almost exclusively by graduates of Padua. Becoming director of the Academy in 1624, Corydaleus oversaw many secular reforms and the opening of schools around the Empire, which were based on the philosophical and scientific spirit of the European Renaissance.⁶⁷ Staffed with western educated teachers providing instruction in medicine, science, philosophy and European languages, these centres of learning would greatly benefit the Phanariots and the emerging merchant class.

After the defeats of the latter seventeenth century, the Porte increasingly turned to the Phanariots for administrative purposes. As the Empire's northern borders receded, Slavic populations were proving to be untrustworthy as Christian armies pushed closer to Slav lands. In addition to greater loyalty, the Phanariots, thanks to their western educations, proved very useful linguists for purposes of negotiation and interpretation. Ottoman officials despised those who lived beyond the borders of their civilization and did not consider learning European languages a matter worthy of their attention.⁶⁸ As long as the Empire continued to expand, there was little reason for them to bother learning the languages of cultures they considered inferior. However, with the Empire losing ground, the need for knowledge of European ways and languages became of vital importance.⁶⁹ The Phanariots became indispensable. Some rose to the top of Ottoman bureaucracy.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Ibid., 39.

⁶⁷ Ibid. As mentioned, some Greek schools were opened around Macedonia in the mid-seventeenth century.

⁶⁸ Bernard Lewis, *What Went Wrong?* 43.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 53. Schools were established out of the necessity of modernizing to keep up with the West. However, partaking in education was left to the middle classes. The Muslim religious establishment of the Ottoman Empire remained convinced of its own superiority and did not engage in learning the ways and languages of the West. As Lewis summarizes: "The cumulative effect of modernization was, paradoxically, not to increase freedom but to reinforce autocracy."

⁷⁰ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 270-271.

While the eighteenth century was a time of prosperity and power for the Phanariots, for the majority of Greeks, things were only slowly improving. Most remained peasants; working the land or the sea and able to do little more than subsist by doing so. Successive wars between the Ottoman Empire and Venice had wrought repeated devastation to many of those who resided in the Peloponnese and the islands of the Aegean and the Adriatic as these territories changed hands and changed hands again. Many chose to leave. By the time the Treaty of Karlowitz was signed in 1699, momentarily giving the Peloponnese to Venice, the population of the region had been reduced to 90,000 people due to death and migration.⁷¹ Peasants would see their fortunes improve somewhat in the latter eighteenth century, but the largest fortunes were being amassed by the Greek merchant communities.

Thanks to intrepid Greek merchant mariners, Greek communities had been established around the Black Sea, the Mediterranean and as far away as England and India by the eighteenth century. During the successive wars between France and Great Britain in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Greek merchants proved apt at slipping through British blockades to French ports while keeping Britain's war economy alive by running Napoleon's continental blockade through to British ports.⁷² Greek merchants also utilized overland trade routes to Central Europe, enjoyed rich trade links with Russia and had the run of the Dardanelle Straits.⁷³ Greek merchants had the best of both worlds and reaped immense profits. They were, therefore, able to afford the best possible education for their children, not only in the Patriarchate's academies, but in the intellectual centres of the day—principally Paris. The student sons of wealthy merchants learned about the glory of ancient Athens, and became increasingly restless with the contrast between the enlightened West they were told their ancestors had inspired and the unchanging state of affairs in the Greek lands under the "Ottoman yoke." In Stavrianos' words, the new class of Greek merchants and intellectuals

⁷¹ Ibid., 274.

⁷² Resat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, 20.

⁷³ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 275. The Treaties of Kuchuk Kainarji in 1774 and Jassy in 1792 between Russia and the Ottoman Empire allowed the Straits to be opened for Austrian and Russian commerce. Greeks merchants of the Ottoman Empire were allowed to fly the Russian flag on their vessels, protecting them from extortion and exempting them from taxation by Ottomans.

had become familiar with European countries and institutions. They had been impressed by the size and wealth of the great cities, by the unheard-of progress in science and learning, and, above all by the rule of law and the safeguarding of individual rights. At home, under Turkish rule, everything was different. The progress that had been made during the past century had been made in spite of, rather than because of, Ottoman suzerainty. The merchant at home had no roads for the transportation of his goods. He lacked security and carried on his operations under constant threat of extortion and outright confiscation.⁷⁴

The French Revolution inspired this new class to believe that change could not come through reform. They judged that the old order would have to be cast off from Ottoman administrators and tax collectors to the Greek Patriarchate itself.

The investments of the Greek merchant communities were providing for a scholarly inquiry into Greek nationality. Investments in schools, libraries and publishing resulted in a seven-fold increase in Greek language publication in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Students were not only going to Paris but to universities in the German states where emphasis was placed on language and civilization and ancient Greece was revered. For a foreign-schooled generation of wealthy merchants' sons, education was seen as the key to national enlightenment and freedom.

Adamantios Korais was one member of this new class who was convinced that through education the "double yolk" of Ottoman rule and "the monkish obscurantism of the hierarchs of the Orthodox Church" could be cast off.⁷⁵ Born in the Asia Minor port of Smyrna in 1748, Korais received "an eclectic and unconventional education" in his native city before going to Amsterdam to help run his father's silk trading business.⁷⁶ Moving later to Paris, he bore enthusiastic witness to the French Revolution, but was appalled by its violence. Korais sought to revive the spirit of ancient Athens. Like Vuk Karadzic in Serbia, he produced a revised form of the Greek language (*Katharevousa*) which combined ancient Greek and popularly spoken Greek into a literary language. While Korais did much to propagate and promote Greek language and culture, he did not engage in violent agitation. But others were willing to do so.

Rigas Velestinlis was one man willing to take patriotic agitation a stage further. A Hellenized Vlach, Velestinlis worked for the Phanariot hospodars of Wallacia before

⁷⁴ Ibid., 277.

⁷⁵ Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 28.

being intoxicated by the French Revolution whilst in Vienna in the 1790s. In successive publications he outlined his plan to revolutionize the Balkans and create a new Byzantine Empire with French style republican institutions which, while multi-ethnic, would be dominated by Greeks.⁷⁷ Velesinlis' most famous work would be the *Thourios*, a revolutionary anthem which historian Thomas Gallant likens to a "Greek *Marseillaise*."⁷⁸ He did not hesitate to travel and articulate his vision of national revolution. As he was about to leave Austrian controlled Italy to spread the word in the Balkans, Velesinlis was arrested and later deported to the Ottoman Empire. He was executed in Belgrade in 1798, but not before proclaiming: "This is how brave men die. I have sown; soon the hour will come when my nation will gather the ripe fruit."⁷⁹ The Greek revolution had its first martyr.

More young men continued to learn of Korais and Velesinlis and receive western European educations thanks to funding from the *Philomuse Society*. Founded in Athens in 1812, this was a "literary club" which received the support of notable Greek sympathizers (Philhellenes) such as King Ludwig I of Bavaria and Tsar Alexander I of Russia.⁸⁰ The *Philomuse Society* did little in terms of physically inciting revolution. Nevertheless, it did keep young Greeks going to western universities and provided a smokescreen for the far less benign *Philike Hetairia*.

Philike Hetairia (the Friendly Society) was founded in Odessa in 1814 by three merchants from different parts of the Empire. According to historian George Finlay, "the first members of *Philike Hetairia* were bankrupt merchants and intriguing adventures, possessed of some cunning and great enthusiasm."⁸¹ Of the three founders, Emmanouil Xanthos possessed the most energy. Having travelled throughout the Balkans for his olive oil business, he had been very impressed by his visit to the Ionian Island of Lefkada when it was under French rule. While there, he was exposed to notions of freedom and

⁷⁶ Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 10.

⁷⁷ Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 29.

⁷⁸ Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 12.

⁷⁹ L.I. Vranousis, ed., *Rigas-erevna, synogogi kai meleti*, (Athens, 1953), quoted in Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 12.

⁸⁰ C.M. Woodhouse, *Modern Greece, A Short History* (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1998), 130.

⁸¹ George Finlay, *A History of Greece From Its Conquest by the Romans to the Present Time, BC 146 to AD 1864, Vol VI* (New York: AMS Press, 1970), 98.

liberty and accepted into the island's Masonic lodge.⁸² Hence, Xanthos developed a set of masonic rituals to initiate new members through *Philike Hetairia's* four grades of membership and a letter of commendation with the slogan "Freedom or Death."

Philike Hetairia's membership grew slowly at first and was limited primarily to merchant communities. It began to attract more members towards the end of the 1810s thanks to world events. With the Napoleonic wars over, there were no blockades to run and far fewer markets to access. The merchant fleets of north-western Europe were also free to compete with the Greeks. In addition, volcanic eruptions in the south Pacific brought about bad weather and low crop yields around the world. In an economically depressed time in which regional Ottoman *ayans* increasingly abused their authority, the messages of *Philike Hetairia* appealed to growing number of disgruntled Greeks from diverse backgrounds.⁸³ The spirit of the French Revolution, the success of the Serbs and the occupation of the Ionian Islands by the French followed by the British were signs to an increasing number of Greeks that their time had come. *Philike Hetaria's* membership increased rapidly after 1818.

Yet so diverse and eclectic was its membership that *Philike Hetairia* had a hard time articulating a vision beyond liberation from the Porte. Designs for the future ranged from a French-inspired republic to a Byzantine theocracy. Merchants and intellectuals were joined in the ranks of the secret society by idealistic, young lower clergy, Phanariots as well as opportunistic bandits. The Serbian rebel leader Karadjordje joined, envisioning some pan-Balkan state. Ultimately, *Philike Hetairia* benefited from good timing, yet without its organization, revolutionary ideas and plans for coordinated action, the Greek revolution might not have begun when it did. *Philike Hetairia* succeeded in agitating sufficiently to initiate an uprising with enough of a mass following to give a rebellion a chance at success.

⁸² Thomas W. Gallant, *Modern Greece*, 15.

⁸³ *Ibid.* Gallant notes that *Philike Hetairia's* membership included men from several echelons of Greek society. He stops short of calling the society a true mass movement as very few peasants, shepherds and workers can be found on its membership lists. However, Gallant reasons this may be due to the organization's reluctance to include those from the lower classes as members. *Philike Hetairia's* appeal increased dramatically after initial military success in the Peloponnese with thousands of peasants joining the rebel ranks out opportunity, but also out of genuine feelings faith and nationality. See L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 280.

The revolutionaries took their chance when Sultan Mahmud II sent the bulk of his available forces to silence Ali Pasha of Ioannina in the spring of 1821. With this diversion, Phanariot Alexander Ypsilantis led a party of 4,500 *Philike Hetairia* members across the Pruth River into Ottoman Moldavia with the plan to set off a Balkan-wide revolution in March of 1821. After years of hardship under Phanariot rule, the locals did not heed the call to arms. Other uprisings were put down, including one in Macedonia. The exception was the Peloponnese, where disgruntled, land hungry peasants and opportunistic *klephts* (bandits) joined to overwhelm the limited Ottoman forces and slaughter the local Muslim population. Thanks to hard fighting and geography, the Greek rebels were able to hold the Peloponnese for the years to come. The Greek merchant marine, already armed and familiar with naval combat from encounters with African pirates, sealed the peninsula from the sea while *klephts* turned guerrillas stymied Ottoman armies attempting to access the Peloponnese through the passes to the north. Most importantly, the attention of Europe was captured through news of massacres and heroic struggles. Though small in number, philhellenes, such as Lord Byron, brought such celebrity to the Greek struggle that the Great Power governments could not ignore it; though most certainly would have liked to have done so.⁸⁴ When the Ottoman Empire was able to bring sufficient force to bear on the Peloponnese in 1827 with the Egyptian army and navy, a European fleet was sent that would destroy the Egyptian fleet at Navarino. Although it would not meet all of their ambitions, the Greek revolutionaries were about get their free state.

European-inspired Greek intellectuals had succeeded in organizing a movement that attracted enough support, had enough success, and provoked enough horrific reprisals, to prompt Great Power intervention, leading to independence. The Greek state was established under strict Great Power tutelage and its frontiers only encompassed a third of the Greek population. Nonetheless, small and poor as it was, the Greeks had an internationally recognized sovereign state. They could build their nation and educate their

⁸⁴ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 287-288; Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 39. Exhausted by the Napoleonic Wars, the Great Powers wished to uphold the status quo after 1815. Although the powers all coveted the territories of the Ottoman Empire, they feared war with one another should Ottoman territory be partitioned. The fact that independent states might emerge from the empire did not occur to them. Pressure from philhellenes, Egyptian involvement and fear of Russian intervention prompted the British to pursue a policy of "peaceful interference," the sum of which was the Battle of Navarino.

population as they pleased. The Greek experience showed that a “submerged” nation could throw off Ottoman rule and achieve independence. Moreover, it was a victory for the principle of nationalism so espoused by revolutionary and romantic European thinkers and ever more echoed in the classrooms of Christian students in the Ottoman Empire. Throughout the dynastic empires of Europe and the Near East, new classes of educated elites from “submerged” nations were ready to agitate for revolutionary upheaval. Nationalism inspired them and education was the key to their success. In the words of Greek specialist C.M. Woodhouse:

The names of Byron and Shelly, Goethe, Schiller and Victor Hugo meant nothing to the Sultan, but these were his real enemies. He was left to depend on Metternich and Castlereagh—an unequal match, as history was to show.⁸⁵

The Principle of Nationality and the Spectre of 1848

For the Great Powers, the triumph of the Greek revolution set a dangerous precedent. A new European state was precisely what the signatories of the Congress of Vienna in 1815 had adamantly not wished to see. The Congress of Vienna was a reassertion of the forces of conservatism to restore the European dynasties and contain the forces of nationalism that had thrown Europe into decades of war. Count Metternich of Austria had presided over the 1815 Vienna proceedings and was instrumental in the following decades in maintaining the Concert of Europe and thwarting national movements. The caretaker of a multi-ethnic empire, Metternich knew that the Habsburg Empire had much to lose if the liberalism and nationalism extolled by the French revolutionaries and articulated by romantic poets ever dominated the politics of Europe.

Serbian autonomy, Greek independence, the July 1830 revolution in France, the Polish rising of 1830-1 and other national movements shook the dynastic order in the first half of the nineteenth century. Across Europe, liberalism and the “principle of nationality” gained strength as an emerging middle class strove to avow itself politically against the old order of divine privilege. Liberalism, as Robin Okey notes, “was Enlightenment from below.”⁸⁶ Yet, the concepts of liberalism did not remain standard as

⁸⁵ C.M. Woodhouse, *Modern Greece, A Short History*, 136.

⁸⁶ Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe 1740-1980, Feudalism to Communism* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1982), 69.

they were adopted across Europe. In the home of liberalism, Great Britain and France, the principle of self determination applied easily since the concepts of state, people and nation were identical.⁸⁷ German and Italian liberals faced different contexts since the states they wished to reform “were products of dynastic warfare and intermarriage; they could not be considered natural entities.”⁸⁸ The question for liberals in Central Europe was how to define the boundaries of their people. The liberal concept of self determination defined a nation as all those who shared common descent, customs, religion and, most importantly, language. Therefore, every nation was, theoretically, entitled to its own state. This presented a simple, yet politically problematic solution to those European states with more than one nation within their borders. As explained by Ludwig von Mises:

Thus the right to self-determination and of government by the people, as expounded by Western liberalism, becomes transformed into the principle of nationality as soon as liberalism becomes a political factor in Central Europe. The political terminology begins to differentiate between state and nation (people). The people (the nation) are all men speaking the same idiom; nationality means community of language.⁸⁹

If applied, the principle of nationality would destroy the existing political status quo of the European dynasties. Understandably, Metternich and his fellow conservatives tried to guard against liberalism and nationalism. Indeed, Metternich recognized the threat that idle, educated, young men instilled with liberalism and nationalism posed to the conservative order.⁹⁰ However, because of the power of the liberal middle classes and the continent-wide political crisis developing in 1848, the conservatives would have to compromise or face their complete downfall. Nationalism was becoming an irrepressible political force that would transform the map of Europe in the coming decades.

⁸⁷ Ludwig von Mises, *Omnipotent Government*, 79-80. von Mises notes that the French were not eager to see their state expand on account of the difficulty of assimilating new populations.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions, 1848-1851* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 2005), 100-101. According to Sperber, in 1844, one of Metternich’s secret agents in Zagreb reported that the local nationalist activities could be reined in if unemployed, educated young men were given government jobs.

Eventually, even Metternich “denounced ‘the rotten edifice’ which it was his duty to uphold.”⁹¹

The revolutions of 1848 were marked by monarchs disposing of their dynasties’ conservative caretakers and bringing intellectuals—brimming with liberalism and nationalism—into the fold of political power. Yet, as a near European-wide realization of the ideals of the French Revolution, 1848 fell short of the dreams of the workers who manned the barricades. The uprisings of 1848 had been triggered by agricultural, industrial and financial crises that brought mobs into the street motivated by “passions and distress rather than by ideas.”⁹² In capital after capital, the rebellious workers were crushed as coalitions of nobles, middle classes and peasants were built against them out of fear that the urban proletariat might actually seize power. Middle class intellectuals were then able to walk over the bodies of the dead workers and into partnerships with monarchs in the halls of power. Dynasties were replaced by constitutional monarchies in which the middle class had increased political power. As summarized by Lewis Namier: “The working classes touched off and the middle classes cashed in on it.”⁹³

While the uprisings and aftermath in the respective capitals were certainly unique, their common thread was nationalism. 1848 was dubbed the “Springtime of Nations.” The “national sovereignty of the people,” “universal suffrage” and “national self-government” became enshrined principles. No longer were populations to be necessarily limited by borders.⁹⁴ Vague as the messages may have been, they fed unionist movements in Central Europe and secessionist aspirations in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Americas. Namier reduces 1848 to a conflict

between two principles—of dynastic power in countries and national sovereignty: the one feudal in origin, historic in its growth and survival, deeply rooted, but difficult to defend in argument; the other grounded in reason and ideas, simple and convincing, but as unsuited to living organisms as chemically pure water.⁹⁵

⁹¹ A.J.P. Taylor, *Europe: Grandeur and Decline*, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1967), 27.

⁹² Sir Lewis Namier, *1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals* (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), 7.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ A.J.P. Taylor, *Europe: Grandeur and Decline*, 30.

⁹⁵ Sir Lewis Namier, *1848: The Revolution of the Intellectuals*, 24.

Thus, 1848 threw open a multitude of national questions from the Baltic to the Balkans. Metternich's era of peace was over. The era of every nation versus its neighbours had dawned. In larger, geopolitical terms:

The conduct of affairs was now to be in the hands of men such as Palmerston, Napoleon III, Cavour and Bismarck, and nationalism was once again ascendant. The diplomatic balance was upset as the powers looked jealously at the decaying Ottoman Empire, and as the unification of Italy and also of Germany, challenged the position of France.⁹⁶

In Central and Western Europe, nationalism unified nations and strengthened them into states that became great powers, if they were not already. In the decades following 1848, the Hapsburg and Ottoman Empires were humbled, while Italy, Germany and France expanded and consolidated their holdings. As Oliver Zimmer elucidates, nations became mass communities as "...the concept of nation—with its constitutive notions of cultural authenticity, historicist growth and political self-determination—began to capture the imagination of the wider public and became a key mobilizing force in the political area."⁹⁷ Mass rituals, commemorative events, pantheons of national heroes, daily newspapers and democratic participation help bind populations together. The authority of government insured that no citizen of the modern state was beyond the reach of its many agents, including its schoolteachers, who helped guarantee the literacy and loyalty of the citizenry via compulsory primary education.⁹⁸ To the Slavic intellectuals of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, the powerful, national states to their west were to be emulated, but also feared. The Slavs did not simply wish to trade one form of political domination for another, be it that of a Great Power or an aggressive neighbour.

It was in an atmosphere of such fear that Slav intellectuals from around Eastern Europe convened at the Slav Congress in Prague during the late spring of 1848. To the

⁹⁶ Viscount Montgomery, *A History of Warfare* (London: William Collins, Sons & Company Ltd, 1968), 413.

⁹⁷ Oliver Zimmer, *Nationalism in Europe, 1890-1940* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2003), 27.

⁹⁸ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 80-81.

south, the Greeks had established a state and the Serbs and Romanians⁹⁹ had gained their autonomy. Calls for German unity from the Frankfurt Congress alarmed Czechs and Poles; as did the Habsburg Empire's decision to grant virtual independence to its Hungarians in March of 1848. Yet, the parties at the Slav Congress devoted considerable attention to defining their own respective nations and quarrelling with one another. Pan-Slavism did not resonate at the Congress at all. The most tangible outcome of the Slav Congress was the decision for its own division into three sections: Polish-Ukrainian, Czechoslovak and South Slav.¹⁰⁰ Outsiders perceived the Slavs as a "race" that had a common background, but this was not the case. The Slavs of Eastern Europe and the Balkans had diverse cultural backgrounds bearing traces of their Germanic, Hungarian or Ottoman rulers.¹⁰¹ Dissimilarities in language, however minor, were additionally used to demarcate national differences.

Theorists such as Robin Okey and Benedict Anderson trace the legitimating of Eastern European and Balkan nationalism back to the Romantic Movement and the philosophies of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johan Gottfried Herder.¹⁰² According to Okey, the key was romanticism's love for the diversity of nature and its finding of inspiration in simple and modest things:

So the romantic spirit, adapted to the political sphere, could have a striking relevance for the insignificant national group or for any people which felt itself deficient in the rationalistically conceived means of civilization and progress.¹⁰³

The romantics affirmed to the Slavs—or, at least, Slav intellectuals—that they were an integral part of the classical and Christian tradition of Europe that had given birth to

⁹⁹ Having thrown off Phanariot hospodar rule in favour of local *boyar* rule, the Danube Principalities (Wallacia and Moldavia) achieved autonomy in 1829 thanks to the Treaty of Adrianople between the Ottoman Empire and Russia. With the sons of *boyars* going to Paris and the closeness of Romania to French, western ideas caught on quickly in Bucharest with elites adopting western styles of dress and the philosophy of French Revolutionaries and German Romantics. The idea of a Liberal Romanian state was soon popularized and a revolutionary movement emerged in Bucharest in 1848. Overcoming peasant and some Moldavian resistance, Romanian unity gained momentum with support from Napoleon III after the Crimean War. Ultimately, though, it would be Bismarck's Prussia providing the final underwriting of a foreign prince in 1866, securing Romanian autonomy.

¹⁰⁰ A.P.J. Taylor, *Europe: Grandeur and Decline*, 38-39. As Taylor notes, the national divisions at the Slav Congress foresaw the states of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, two of which have splintered into smaller states.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰² Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe 1740-1980*, 76-77; Benedict Anderson, "Western Nationalism and Eastern Nationalism, Is there a difference that matters?" *New Left Review* 9 (2001): 40.

¹⁰³ Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe 1740-1980*, 76-77.

nationalism. Rousseau and Herder and others urged the Slavs to take pride in their customs, history, folklore and especially language since language was what kept this sacred heritage alive.¹⁰⁴ With their culture and language now legitimized by this conception of nationalism, the Slavs could strive for liberation without fear of condemnation and isolation. It was of foremost importance for all the Slavic peoples to construct dictionaries, transcribe epics and produce generations of intellectuals to validate their nations. Karadzic and Obradovic had done this for Serbia, now the others had to follow suit. Understandably, education would be the key to furthering this linguistic nationalism and it would be up to the educated to fulfil their national missions.

According to Okey, Herder had helped adapt an ideology that suited the Slavs of the East: “With his scorn for serfdom, nobility and arbitrary power, Herder appeared to have pointed the way to an intoxicating synthesis of national feeling and liberal ideology.”¹⁰⁵ However, this interpretation was “a distortion, not a perfection of liberal thought.”¹⁰⁶ According to von Mises, the emergent Eastern European intellectuals had an all together more ominous outlook to their nationalism:

They did not look forward to a new liberal Europe but backwards to the glorious past of their victorious kings and conquerors, as depicted by their historians and writers....The principle of nationality was derived from the liberal principle of self-determination. But the Poles, Czechs and the Magyars substituted for the democratic principle an aggressive nationalism aiming at the domination of people speaking other languages.¹⁰⁷

According to Anderson, this “linguistic nationalism” decrees “that each nation is marked off by its own peculiar language and literary culture, which together expressed that people’s historical genius.”¹⁰⁸ If Eastern European intellectuals misinterpreted western liberalism, their sympathetic, Western and Central European counterparts did not appreciate the inherent difficulty of applying linguistic nationalism to the realities of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. The medley of peoples in the Habsburg and Ottoman Balkans made the German question look simple by comparison. The application of

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 78. Language was considered to be the ‘natural’ determinate of a nation. Therefore, linguistic boundaries should determine national and state boundaries.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 77.

¹⁰⁶ Ludwig von Mises, *Omnipotent Government*, 89.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 81.

¹⁰⁸ Benedict Anderson, “Western Nationalism and Eastern Nationalism,” 40.

linguistic nationalism, the clarifying voice of arbitrary reason in Central Europe, brought no such clarity in the Balkans, especially Macedonia. Ernest Gellner argues that this is the key difference between Central Europe and the Balkans:

The basic point is simple: in conditions such as those which prevail in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Volga bend, much of central Asia and many other parts of the world, culturally homogeneous nation-states, such as are held to be normative and prescribed by history in nationalist theory, can be produced only by ethnic cleansing. In such areas, either people must be persuaded to forgo the implementation of the nationalist ideal, or ethnic cleansing must take place. There is no third way.¹⁰⁹

In the Balkans, generations of Christian students, energetically reading at home and studying abroad, immersed themselves in the works of the European literary canon and the latest in radical philosophy. Education made them aware, or more aware, of their nation, and heightened their sense of pride. In addition, their learning provided them with models to emulate and programs for action as well as an inspirational ideology that assured them of their righteousness. As defined by Okey, a distinctly Balkan nationalism emerged:

Strangely mixing Orthodox Christianity, heroic folk poetry and the rights of man, borne by the literate and mobile – priests, merchants, itinerant teachers—Balkan nationalism preached that the Slavs were the rightful heirs of European power against barbarous, Asiatic Turks.¹¹⁰

Therefore, the emergent intellectual leadership of these national movements logically saw that the path to European style statehood would be a bloody struggle. No amount of reform or repression by Ottoman officials could dampen the spirit of nationalism. The principle of nationality would determine the future of the Balkans. This did not bode well for the disparate peoples inhabiting the hills and plains of Macedonia.

The Ottoman Reforms

During the eighteenth century, the Ottoman Empire went from being Europe's terror to its sick man.¹¹¹ As the Empire lost successive battles and territory on all fronts,

¹⁰⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism* (London: Weidfeld & Nicolson, 1997), 56.

¹¹⁰ Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe 1740-1980*, 102.

¹¹¹ "The Sick Man of Europe" phrase was coined by Czar Nicholas II about the time of the Greek War of Independence. See: Andre Gerolymatos, *The Balkan Wars*.

the realization set in that reforms would be necessary to stem the advances of the Europeans. Sultan Selim III was the first sultan to dare to attempt to modernize the Empire around the turn of the nineteenth century. Selim's primary concern was to reform the Ottoman military along European lines in order to reverse the succession of defeats it had suffered. Reform helped the military achieve some victories in the field, but the old army, led by the Janissaries, saw their power threatened. The Janissaries and other anti-Europe, traditionalist elements conspired to undermine the Sultan. When the Janissaries revolted in Constantinople in 1807, Selim relented; his reformist grand vizir was thrown to the mobs and the Sultan was deposed shortly thereafter.¹¹²

After another revolt a year later, Sultan Mahmud II came to power. Quietly and cleverly he undermined the traditionalists by stocking the bureaucracy with men he could trust, thereby enabling the creation of reformed military units to use against the Janissaries and recalcitrant *ayans* like Ali Pasha of Ioannina. Mahmud was finally able to crush the Janissaries in 1827, and centralize power by re-establishing the Porte's authority in the regions; although not without further loss of territory. In addition to Serbian autonomy and Greek independence, Egypt had attained a strong degree of autonomy in 1805. Wahabbi fundamentalists on the Arabian Peninsula also violently revolted and for a time occupied Mecca and Medina. Their aim was not autonomy within the Empire but escape from it, as their leaders denied the legitimacy of the Sultan.¹¹³ In 1812 Ottoman troops, led by Muhammad Ali of Egypt, overran the Wahhabis, forcing the revolt's surviving leaders to seek the protection of the British in the port of Jeddah.¹¹⁴

Mahmud's most significant action was to initiate the training of diplomats and important officials in European languages. As Ottoman historian Justin McCarthy notes: "Bureaucrats trained in the bureau called the Translation Office developed not only linguistic skills but also a Western Orientation."¹¹⁵ Reshid Mustafa Pasha was one such

¹¹² Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 13.

¹¹³ Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922*, 51.

¹¹⁴ Stephan Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam, Saudi Fundamentalism and Its Role in Terrorism* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), 89. The survivors were members of the Al Sa'ud family who would later rule Saudi Arabia. As with the Greeks, British support for the Wahhabis was to further the interests of the British Empire and to undermine the Ottoman Empire. With the exception of Egypt, few if any of the autonomy and independence movements of the nineteenth century would have met with much success without Great Power support.

¹¹⁵ Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*, 15.

man who advanced quickly through the bureaucratic ranks to become one of the foremost reformers in Ottoman history. Having grasped the need for bureaucratic reform through his experience as a civil servant and as ambassador to Paris and London, Reshid Mustafa Pasha became grand vizer in 1845, presiding over the implementation of the *Tanzimat* Reforms and the training his successors. *Tanzimat* amounted to the western rule of law. Later, under the provision of the *Hatti-Humayun* reform edict of 1856, the Porte extended secular rights to all subjects of the Empire regardless of religion. Assuming power in 1839, Sultan Abd-ul-Mejid was determined to implement radical reform and gave his grand vizer the license to do so. Administrative, legal, military and commercial reforms were approved on paper with varying degrees of implementation. But perhaps the most significant and far-reaching reforms were to education in the Ottoman Empire.

Out of military necessity, Western-style academies had been set up in the late eighteenth century. These institutions were based on the French model and were staffed largely by French instructors who, of course, instructed in Europe's lingua franca. Following the example of the Russians, engineering, medical and science schools were soon established with related specialist secondary schools to follow.¹¹⁶ The number of schools grew rapidly after 1820, continuing to increase after the *Tanzimat* Reforms. *Tanzimat* also prompted the creation of a public education system. The focus in the public system was technical, but the number of schools was relatively few. Reform was slow and limited access to secular education meant that the education system served primarily to create an elite to head the military and run the bureaucracy. The rulers remained aloof; the masses remained illiterate. Nevertheless, as Justin McCarthy argues, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Porte did make a concerted effort to expand access to education:

The sincerity of the Ottoman effort at educational reform is demonstrated by the government's attitude toward foreign missionary schools. It supported them, despite the fact that they benefited only Christians and sometimes became recruiting centres for separatist movements.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Fatma Muge Gocek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire. Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 70.

¹¹⁷ Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*, 19.

The reformist sultans had wanted the new generations of Western educated elites to reform the Empire while remaining loyal to the ruler's divine authority. However, trips to the West and increased exposure to western culture and educational methodology were stimulating these generations to question the Sultan's absolute power. As had been the case with the sons of Greek merchants going wayward from the rule of the Patriarchate, the new Ottoman elite, inspired by Enlightenment thought and inquiry, began to question the authority of the Sultan. Consequently, a new "bureaucratic bourgeoisie" was shifting its loyalty to the Ottoman State rather than the Sultan. Idealistic "Young Ottomans" were returning from the West with dreams of a constitution and an Ottoman nationalism that would transcend religious boundaries.

Other Ottoman Muslims outside of the government were also making strides as the reform movement gained momentum through the middle of the century. As Greeks had fallen out of favour after the establishment of Greece's independence, more Muslims prospered as merchants and money lenders. By 1850, the power of the Muslim merchants equalled that of the bureaucratic elite.¹¹⁸ Still, it was men in government who confronted conservatives and pushed the envelope of reform. Their infatuation with the West became more apparent as they adopted western styles of dress and habits. Printing presses were established, books in western languages appeared on the streets of the capital, and banned literature was smuggled in through European postal systems.

While conservatives in the bureaucracy did their best to hinder or dilute reform measures, students grew more restless. Medical students in particular became notorious for acts of symbolic resistance such as not taking the oath of blind obedience to the Sultan or for shouting their own versions of slogans such as, "Vile man, damn the sultan!" at official functions.¹¹⁹ Along with those in the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the students formed secret societies and hatched plots. These were the sons of the *Tanzimat* Reforms: the Young Ottomans, predecessors of the Young Turks. Idealists, the Young Ottomans "were poor revolutionaries but good propagandists."¹²⁰ Thanks to them, the idea of a constitution was at least kept alive. Some steps were taken towards realizing a

¹¹⁸ Resat Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy*, 60. More prosperity for Muslims did not translate into increased revenues for the Porte since Muslims did not pay taxes.

¹¹⁹ Fatma Muge Gocek, *Rise of Bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire*, 75.

¹²⁰ Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*, 25.

secular Ottoman nationalism in the 1870s, but by that time, for example, Bulgarian nationalist agitators were prepared to settle for nothing short of autonomy. Furthermore, Muslim refugee populations streaming in from lands lost to European states wanted nationalism that would put the Muslims of the Empire first. Reform could not simply keep up with the spread of nationalism and the effects brought upon the Empire by external forces.

The progression of reformers from the early pioneers to the men of *Tanzimat* to the Young Ottomans demonstrates that the Ottoman Empire was not an inert entity of reaction through the nineteenth century. As was the case with the Balkan Christians, some students were getting a European education and entering professional careers determined to bring about reform. New western style educational institutions provided a natural space for “scholarly inquiry,” where reformers could form secret societies and build networks to agitate for change. The reformers were instrumental in ending the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz in 1876. The Sultan’s maid recalled how the military officers who arrested Abdulaziz did so in the name of the state and treated the Sultan with profound disrespect.¹²¹ A constitution and parliament came into being at the end of 1876, but the defeat of Ottoman Empire in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78 prompted the new sultan, Abdulhamit II, to dissolve parliament, dismiss prominent reformers and rule as an autocrat. It was the next practically minded generation of reformers, the Young Turks, who would lead a successful mass movement of secular nationalist revolution in 1908; and they would start their uprising in the hills of Macedonia.

Summary

The Ottoman Empire was by no means a static entity. The peoples of Macedonia and the Ottoman Balkans did not live in medieval isolation from rest of the world. The Balkans’ geography makes the region a strategic crossroads and a corridor for the transportation and trade of products and ideas. What the Ottoman Empire did preserve was religious segregation through its administrative *millet* system. Importantly, the *millet* system allowed the religious leaders of the various communities to control aspects of

their own civil affairs, including education. Therefore, the theocratic order of the Ottoman Empire preserved the religion, language and identity of the Balkan Christians, giving emergent nationalist agitators clearly defined audiences to proselytize.

Education was the key to the emergence of nationalism and national movements in the nineteenth century Ottoman Balkans. The decline of the Ottoman Empire created favourable circumstances for patriotic agitators to exploit. Certain Christian populations and social groups had enjoyed autonomy and power in the structure of the Ottoman Empire. While these Christians did help preserve and promote Christian education in the Empire, those who travelled and learned in the West were the ones who provoked revolution. The Serbian Uprising of 1804 was led by worldly peasants who were inspired in part by Serbian intellectuals that studied in Vienna. In the Greek lands, the sons of wealthy merchants had the opportunity to study in the leading universities of the western capitals. Stirred by new ideologies and awakened to their own national past glories, they returned with a determination to free their people from the ecclesiastical and political yokes of the Ottoman Empire. Their efforts at patriotic agitation and some favourable circumstances created a mass movement in the Greek Peloponnese that was able to hold off the Ottoman forces until the Great Powers intervened on the Greek side. In time, the Greek state was established.

The Serbs, and especially the Greeks, showed that “submerged” peoples could realize autonomy and statehood. Eastern European and Balkan intellectuals continued to receive validation from western liberals, romantics and revolutionaries who encouraged them to take pride in their respective language, culture and history and emulate the modern states of Western Europe. The legitimization of the principle of nationality after 1848 further strengthened the causes of nationalist agitators in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Indeed, nationalism and modernism were transforming the Ottoman Empire itself as new classes of Ottoman professionals versed in the ways of the West emerged to reform the Empire and challenge the authority of the sultans. However, for the intellectual leaders from the remaining “submerged” Christian populations of the Ottoman Balkans, no degree of reform would suffice. The Greeks and Serbs had shown

¹²¹ Fatma Muge Gocek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire*, 80. The major in command ordered his men to call the sultan “Aziz Efendi” instead of “my exalted sultan.”

the way and independence became the goal. In the second half of the nineteenth century, a Bulgarian national movement would emerge that would challenge the Porte and rival national movements both in the lands of present-day Bulgaria and Geographic Macedonia. As the claims of different national movements began to overlap, education became ever more critical for establishing holds on territory and winning local support.

Chapter II: School Settings

Plans for Change

Following the success of the Greek Revolution, the Ottomans furthered their efforts to retain their dwindling European territories. Yet, the Porte's efforts, whether coercive or reformist, only served to stimulate the independent aspirations of the Empire's Balkan Christians. With the autonomous Danubian Principalities to the north and independent Greece to the south, nationalism amongst the Bulgarians grew in the mid-nineteenth century, especially with the increase in secular Greek schools in the Bulgarian lands. As had been the case with the Greeks, wealthy Bulgarian merchants were sending their children away for secular education, awakening Bulgarian patriotism in them. By the mid-nineteenth century, secular Bulgarian schools were spreading throughout the Bulgarian lands. This rapid growth was aided by new innovations in mass education and the printing presses of Protestant missionaries, who supplied Bulgarian language textbooks as well as bibles in their impossible effort to win converts. The expanding network of Bulgarian schools began to come into conflict with Greek schools in Rumelia, Thrace and Macedonia, setting the stage for future conflict.

Systems to Work with

During the years of the *Tanzimat* reforms in the mid-nineteenth century, the Ottomans made efforts to improve the lives of the Empire's Balkan Christians. The *Hatti-Humayun* of 1856 called for the protection of the rights of all citizens and for the reorganization of the Orthodox *millet* to reflect "the progress and enlightenment of the times."¹ This amounted to reestablishment of Bulgarian and Serbian *millets* to balance the Greeks. Inspection tours were increased to enforce order and eliminate corruption and

¹ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 386.

Christian delegates were appointed to legal councils. Still, it was not enough to win the loyalty of the Balkan Christians. Thanks to the legacy of the *millet* system, fundamental divisions remained. As McCarthy notes, the Ottomans “could not call upon the patriotic support from minority groups. Instead, these groups developed their own individual nationalism, which was to become one of the main factors in the dissolution of the Empire.”² Even popular, reformist administrators like Midhat Pasha of the Bulgarian lands, could not completely eliminate nationalist revolutionary sentiments, despite his generous reforms and ruthless hunting down of rebels.³ In recognizing that the Bulgarian schools were “cradles of national consciousness,” Midhat Pasha proposed to merge Turkish and Bulgarian schools to pre-empt Bulgarian nationalism. The Bulgarians recognized the scheme’s intentions and emphatically rejected the idea.⁴ As summarized by L.S. Stavrianos: “Neither *millet* reform nor vilayet reorganization had succeeded in inducing among the subject Balkan peoples a sense of loyalty to Constantinople strong enough to neutralize their growing feeling of national consciousness.”⁵ Ambitious nationalist intellectuals amongst the Balkan Christians had resolve and favourable conditions to work with, but could they exploit the situation and spread their message? Indeed, they could, and did thanks to the Ottoman education system and some recent innovations in teaching.

In the latter eighteenth century, there were calls in Western Europe to reform education to the socioeconomic transformations taking place. Liberals made humanist and utilitarian arguments, reasoning that large-scale public education would serve the industrializing economies and create good citizens. Though fearful of educated masses, conservatives agreed to increase public education, calculating that if mass the education was to exist, they should control it.⁶ Large, secular state schools were established, taking education—for the poor—away from religious organizations and informal neighbourhood schools run by women. Education was standardized, licensed and professionalized.

² Justin McCarthy, *The Ottoman Peoples and the End of Empire*, 12.

³ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 387.

⁴ Mercia MacDermott, *A History of Bulgaria 1393-1885* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1962), 301.

⁵ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 388.

⁶ Mary Jo Maynes, *Schooling in Western Europe, A Social History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 39. After the French Revolution, Conservatives increasingly feared any institute in which the poor could organize themselves.

Teaching was “masculinized” into a “real” profession.⁷ However, in classrooms, pedagogical practices remained the same with teachers delivering lessons to larger numbers of passive pupils. According to Mary Jo Maynes, “...the rote learning of the catechism was merely replaced by the rote learning of the principles of nationality or political economy.”⁸ A new methodology of teaching was badly needed.

An innovative new design emerged around the turn of the nineteenth century from two English educators interested in educating the poor. Andrew Bell, a Church of England chaplain working in colonial India, and Joseph Lancaster, a teacher who worked in the impoverished London neighbourhood of Southwark, introduced the “Monitorial” method.⁹ Monitorial or Bell-Lancaster schools were inexpensive, orderly and provided on site teacher training for apt students. A single teacher might teach up to one thousand pupils. Students were assembled in rows with their own slates. The emphasis was on keeping the students working quietly and in unison at all times, even if their tasks and grade levels were different. A system of bells, signals and simultaneous instructions insured the students knew what was expected of them.¹⁰ Most importantly, student monitors were responsible for “the cleanliness, order and improvement” of small groups of younger students. These monitors reported back to the teacher and taught groups of younger students from charts and cards mounted on the walls, thereby eliminating the need for textbooks.¹¹ Bright students became monitors and monitors could become teachers. The Bell-Lancaster method was applied throughout much of Western Europe and the Americas in the early nineteenth century.

⁷ Ibid., 62-63.

⁸ Ibid., 62.

⁹ Carl F. Kaestle, “Introduction* Education of the English Poor: The Eighteenth-Century Legacy” in *Joseph Lancaster and the Monitorial School Movement, A Documentary History*, ed. Carl F. Kaestle, 4 (New York and London: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1973). According to Kaestle, Bell introduced the method first, but Lancaster developed the method on his own, having not read Bell’s book when he began his work in London. Kaestle notes that Bell may well have borrowed from a centuries old tradition in Hindu schools of using monitors in large classes.

¹⁰ Joseph Lancaster, “Improvement in Education as it Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community... (1805)” in *Joseph Lancaster and the Monitorial School Movement, A Documentary History*, ed. Carl F. Kaestle, 93-95 (New York and London: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1973). Students were trained to respond to initials such as T.S. (Turn slates), S.S.C. (Show slates clean), H.D. (Hands down), etc.

¹¹ Ibid., 63-67. The ratio of students to monitors was, ideally, ten to one.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Bell-Lancaster method went out of favour in Western Europe.¹² But in the Balkans, its popularity was growing. Greek schools in the Romanian Principalities began to implement Bell-Lancaster methods around 1820 and their graduating students spread the doctrine into Greece. More Greek schools adopted the Bell-Lancaster method on the recommendation of Greek president Count John Capodistrias, who had observed the system in practice in Europe.¹³ The Bell-Lancaster method was used by British schools in the Ionian Islands and the missionary societies that set up schools around the Balkans and the Levant. As Bell-Lancaster schools were inexpensive to operate and the methodology easy to learn and apply elsewhere, they became popular with nationalists and missionaries alike. Interestingly, Lancaster adamantly wrote that: "Above all things, education ought not to be subservient to the propagation of the peculiar tenets of any sect."¹⁴ Despite his passive wishes, Lancaster's pedagogical method became vital to the dissemination of nationalism in the Balkans. Ottoman reforms and Bell-Lancaster methodology enabled the Bulgarian schools to spread throughout Bulgaria and into Macedonia in the mid nineteenth century in a struggle that was evolving into a contest for the hearts and minds of those in Macedonia.

Bulgarian Awakening

Furthest from the Empire's European frontiers and with a smaller diaspora, revolutionary sentiments were slower to reach the Bulgarian lands than they were to reach Serbia, Greece and Romania. Medieval Bulgaria had at times been a regional power before being overwhelmed first by the Byzantine Empire and later by the Ottomans in the fourteenth century. With volumes of history in Old Slavonic stacked in monasteries, it is not surprising that the first awakener was a monk. Pailisi Hilendarski, a monk who lived and studied in the Bulgarian monasteries of Hilendar and Zograf on Mt.

¹² Carl F. Kaestle, "Introduction* Education of the English Poor: The Eighteenth-Century Legacy," 43-44. Monitorial schooling fell out of favour with the popularity of the Pestalozzian pedagogy, which emphasized the relationship between the student and the teacher. Bell-Lancaster also became stigmatized as an education system for the poor.

¹³ James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), 206.

¹⁴ Joseph Lancaster, "Improvement in Education as it Respects the Industrious Classes of the Community... (1805)," 63.

Athos, became convinced that Bulgarians had to rediscover their medieval past in order to avoid Hellenization. Païsi was born in Macedonia in the town of Bansko in 1722 and became a *taxidiot* (itinerant) monk during his time at Hilendar. This position required him to get out of the monastery and interact in the villages. Païsi became incensed at the extreme contrast between the glory of Medieval Bulgaria he studied in the monastery libraries and the struggle of the village folk, especially compared to the more prosperous and powerful Greeks. He travelled to the Austrian Empire to study Russian texts and returned to Mt. Athos to write a polemical history which recalled Bulgaria's former glory and warned of the dangers of Hellenization.¹⁵ Païsi's work would be thrown into temporary obscurity as the Bulgarians endured considerable hardship during the wars and the breakdown of authority which plagued the Ottoman Empire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

While the merchant Greeks were prospering during this period, the Bulgarians were enduring the misery the Greeks had suffered a century earlier. Austria and Russia had replaced Venice as the principal adversaries of the time and the Bulgarians were caught in the thoroughfare as undisciplined, unruly Ottoman armies in transit inflicted more damage on Bulgarian peasants than they did on enemy forces.¹⁶ New *chifliks*, abusive *ayans* and increased banditry all added to the misery. There was significant depopulation as some fled to the hills and others left by the thousands for the Danube Principalities and the Russian Empire.¹⁷

Yuri Venelin was a teacher in a seminary in Kishinev (the capital of present day Moldavia) who came into contact with several Bulgarian refugees. Although a Russian who was an Austrian subject, Venelin endeavoured to study Bulgarian history while at medical school in Moscow and published *History of the Ancient and Present-day Bulgars* in 1829. Venelin had harsh criticism for Russia's ignoring of the Bulgarians, who had given Russia "baptism and the alphabet."¹⁸ He was also critical of Russia and the West

¹⁵ R.J. Crampton, *A Short History of Bulgaria*, 47. Written in 1762, Païsi's work was entitled: *A Slavonic-Bulgarian History of the Peoples, Tsars, Saints, and all of their Deeds and of the Bulgarian Way of Life*.

¹⁶ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 366.

¹⁷ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 55. Some 160,000 left after the Treaty of Kutchuk Kainardji in 1774 and following the Russo-Turkish war of 1828-9. Estimates of the number of Bulgarians fleeing behind the Russian army are as high as 250, 000.

¹⁸ Mercia MacDermott, *A History of Bulgaria 1393—1885* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1962), 123.

for lauding Greece while turning blind eyes to the plight of the Bulgarians. Like Paiisi, Venelin's work was emotional and polemical, but unlike Paiisi's book, Venelin's publications were widely read. Intellectuals in Russia and the West began to take note. He became a hero to the Bulgarian émigré communities who were naturally becoming interested in notions of revolution and freedom that they were exposed to in their new surroundings. Venelin later visited the Bulgarian lands to study local folklore and history. However, much like William Leake in Kastoria, he was disappointed by the disinterest local Bulgarians had in their national past. Venelin was not the first nor would he be the last foreign enthusiast who found resident Balkan people decidedly less enthusiastic about studying their own history and improving their situation than himself.

Following in the footsteps and, in some cases, working in collaboration with the Greeks, the Bulgarian émigré communities began to prosper as the nineteenth century progressed. The most prominent communities were in Bucharest, the cities of the Danube delta area and Russia's newly acquired lands around the Black Sea. Smaller communities also existed in places like Venice, Vienna and Marseilles.¹⁹ The largest and most prosperous community of émigré Bulgarians would emerge in Constantinople.²⁰ Demands for mutton, cotton, rice and wax helped drive economic recovery in the Bulgarian homelands. International treaties gave Russian, Greek and Austrian traders better access to Bulgarian goods via the Black Sea and the Danube. The Bulgarians also benefited from the mistrust of the Greeks in the Empire after the outbreak of the Greek revolution in 1821.

The Ottoman Empire's *Tanzimat* reforms were a bonanza for the towns and villages of Bulgaria's Balkan Mountain heartland as the Empire's new professional, European style army demanded uniforms and foodstuffs. Sheep farmers and producers of *aba* (cloth ideally suited for uniforms) grew wealthy by filling the Empire's orders.²¹ The towns of the Balkan Mountains had become preferred places of residence and trade because of the natural security provided by the geography. Thus, previously non-descript

¹⁹ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 55.

²⁰ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 368. By the 1870s, there were some 40,000 Bulgarians in the capital making very good livings as tailors, gardeners and tradesmen and some very prosperous traders.

²¹ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 58. *Aba* was a coarse-grained cloth produced by Bulgarian guilds. In addition, the Ottoman army had a strong demand for *gaitan*, a lace used to decorate officers' uniforms.

places like Kotel, Sliven, Gabrovo and Koprivshitsa became endowed with attractive, traditional architecture, large churches and eventually schools and reading rooms thanks to the benevolence of wealthy guilds. As the mountain towns were almost exclusively Christian and Bulgarian speaking, what better place to centre a cultural revival? Ironically, it was the Ottoman Empire's reform program that was funding much of this Bulgarian Renaissance, which would serve as a springboard for eventual revolution.

Petur Beron was a product of this era in Bulgarian history and a man who symbolized Bulgaria's Renaissance. Born in 1795 or 1797, he was the son of *aba* weavers from Kotel. After some time in a religious cell school in Kotel and an apprenticeship in Varna, he went on to a secular Greek school in Bucharest and found work as a teacher thereafter in Brasov. He became a medical doctor after studying in Heidelberg and Munich and mastered several languages during his work and further studies in Western Europe. As with Serbs, Greeks, Romanians and Turks, Beron was profoundly impressed by the West and became determined to elevate his own people through education. He made considerable financial donations to improve Bulgarian education, while also writing on Bulgarian history and advocating pedagogical reform. Most importantly, he wrote the first secular primer, *Riben Bukvar (The Fish ABC)*, penned in the dialect of his native east Bulgaria.²² The existing religious schools ignored the primer, but thanks to a wealthy patron in Odessa, it would soon be before thousands of young Bulgarians.

Like Beron, Vasil Aprilov came from a small centre in the Balkan Mountains (Gabrovo). He began his education in a religious cell school and went on to Greek and German schools in Moscow and Brasov respectively. Aprilov attained wealth as a merchant in Odessa and sympathized with the Greek revolutionaries of *Philiki Hetairia*. As an educated man, Aprilov considered himself a Greek. His allegiance changed after reading a copy of Venelin's *History* in 1831. Becoming a devout Bulgarian patriot, Aprilov was determined to build secular, European-style schools in Bulgaria and opened one in his native Gabrovo in 1834 with Beron's *ABC* primer on the desks. Aprilov used

²² Mercia MacDermott, *A History of Bulgaria 1393—1885*, 124. In MacDermott's words, it was "a little encyclopaedia" with sections devoted to everything from the alphabet to Christian morality to lessons on bees and ants animals. Beron hoped children would learn lessons of social organization and civic duty from studying social insects. The book was entitled *Fish ABC* after the dolphin on its back cover.

his own wealth and that of other Bulgarian émigrés to fund the schools. Despite their newfound wealth, the notables of Gabrovo were not interested in the project, although the poorer residents of the town were delighted.²³ Aprilov persisted and the Gabrovo school flourished. Soon, local guilds and councils in the region were funding new schools. Critically, Aprilov also imported the Bell-Lancaster teaching method, making it possible for a small number of teachers to cheaply staff and run an expanding system of Bulgarian secular schools.²⁴

Secular education was not an unheard of novelty for the Bulgarians. An alternative to religious cell schools emerged in the form of “Helleno-Bulgarian” schools, which were open to Bulgarian children, providing a secular education, albeit a Greek one, which would ultimately Hellenize many of the pupils.²⁵ During his visit to Struga on Lake Ohrid in Macedonia in the mid 1860s, Oxford fellow Reverend Henry Tozer described his visit to one of these bilingual schools: “The master was a Bulgarian; and the children are taught to read and write in both Greek and Bulgarian, two days in the week being devoted to the latter language.”²⁶ Tozer regarded the school as a sign of “the intrusive Greek element.”²⁷ In the long run, however, this bilingual education served to arouse Bulgarian national sentiment. Some, like Aprilov, initially embraced Greek education for its upward mobility. For others, attendance at such schools inspired secret organizations devoted to Bulgarian nationalism. In any case, attendance at Greek or Helleno-Bulgarian schools gave an entire generation grounding in secular education, which they could pass on in a wholly Bulgarian form.

With the secular school in Gabrovo a success, other “Gabrovo model” schools were opened in nearby towns in the Balkan Mountains over the next half-decade before growing at an exponential rate through the 1840s. By 1850, “most Bulgarian

²³ Ibid., 126.

²⁴ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 62.

²⁵ Mercia MacDermott, *A History of Bulgaria 1393—1885*, 120.

²⁶ Rev. Henry Fanshawe Tozer, *Researches in the Highlands of Turkey; Including Visits to Mounts Ida, Athos, Olympus, and Pellon, to the Mirdite Albanians, and Other Remote Tribes. With Notes on the Ballads, Tales, and Classical Superstitions of the Modern Greeks. Volume I* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1869), 199.

²⁷ Ibid. Tozer noted that the school had 200 pupils who were “very clean and orderly...as they sat at their desks, very much in the style of an English school.” The similarity indicates the implementation of the Bell-Lancaster model of schooling.

communities had a school teaching in the vernacular.”²⁸ Not surprisingly, this vernacular, which would become standard Bulgarian, was based on the language spoken in Gabrovo. The town attained such notoriety for its schools that young people came from all over the Bulgarian lands to study there for decades to come. Travelling through Bulgaria in 1887, British barrister James Samuelson visited Gabrovo specifically to see Aprilov’s creation for himself. Upon inspecting the Gymnasium (Secondary School) and quizzing the students, Samuelson commented that he wished

we had a few such schools in England.... The higher classes showed signs of rapidly-advancing knowledge, and when I got into the highest of all, it was I who felt ashamed of my ignorance!... In all the various branches of a higher education they excelled the pupils in nine out of ten schools of a similar grade in England.²⁹

Samuelson was similarly impressed during an inspection tour of schools in Plovdiv. He noted the boys’ Gymnasium, a city landmark, was a “magnificent” building built at a cost of £26,000 and maintained at £5,000 per annum.³⁰ It was staffed by teachers with “Austrian, Swiss, English and Russian diplomas” and had a library that contained some 2,000 volumes complete with up to date periodicals from around Europe.³¹

With the success of the secular schools, local notables and the guilds began to make investments in Bulgarian education. Beginning in the 1850s, *chitalishte* (reading rooms akin to community centres) began opening around the Bulgarian lands. They were meeting places where people could read books, newspapers, have discussions and improve their literacy. Lectures were often held as well as historical and patriotic plays, which usually were written and performed by teachers and students.³² In time, the *chitalishte* became meeting places for revolutionaries. Mercia MacDermott quotes a passage where a patron of the reading room in Ruse observed an “unknown monk” rush in and lock himself in a room. The narrator peeked through the keyhole to see that the “humble, ragged monk had taken off his cassock and was binding a dozen revolvers.”³³

²⁸ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 62.

²⁹ James Samuelson, *Bulgaria Past and Present Historical, Political, and Descriptive* (London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill, 1888), 161-162.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 145.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 147-148.

³² Mercia MacDermott, *A History of Bulgaria*, 304.

³³ *Ibid.*, 301.

With the rapid growth of schools through the 1840s and 1850s, Bulgarian publishers struggled to keep up with demand. Only an average of one book a year was printed between 1806 and 1834; all of which were printed outside the Ottoman Empire in places like Brasov and Bucharest or in the Austrian Empire.³⁴ The rate of publication would increase considerably after 1840. Scholarships for the new graduates to further their education abroad were also forthcoming. Some went to the West, but the majority received funding to go to Russia.³⁵ After the Crimean War, scholarships were on offer from Russia with the Czar's empire anxious to extend its influence and build Panslavism in the wake of military setback. While some brotherhood was built through this contact, most of the Bulgarian students did not develop a strong sense of loyalty to Czarist Russia. Universities and intellectual circles in 1850s and 1860s Russia swirled with post-1848 notions of nationalism as well as socialism and nihilism. Returning to Bulgaria, these graduates found ready employment in the thin ranks of the Bulgarian teachers. Stoked with knowledge and nationalism, they were determined to rid their homeland of Ottoman and Greek domination. The only question that remained was whether their objective would be best realized through reform or revolution. The patriotic agitating could now begin.

The impact of the spread of Bulgarian schools and nationalism was felt first by the Greeks. The Patriarchate had enjoyed a complete monopoly over the Balkan Christians after the Porte closed the Serbian and Bulgarian Patriarchates in 1766 and 1767. By the 1850s, Greek authority was being questioned by the Bulgarian guilds and the emergent intelligentsia.³⁶ Greek corruption, an increased Slavic consciousness, the creation of a Protestant *millet*, and Ottoman reforms proclaiming the equality of all the Empire's subjects contributed to Bulgarian aspirations for religious autonomy. The Patriarchate resisted, denouncing the rebellious Bulgarians and reporting priests and teachers they disliked to the Ottoman authorities as agents of Russia.³⁷ However, Russia's influence and power became negligible in the aftermath of the Crimean War. Because of

³⁴ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 65.

³⁵ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 369. 500 students received scholarships to study in Russia between 1856 and 1876.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 67. Frequent disagreements forced the Plovdiv *aba* guild to split into Greek and Bulgarian sections.

this, some Bulgarians concluded that they would have to find alternatives to Russian intervention to help realize Bulgarian autonomy if not statehood.

Acts of disobedience by Bulgarian clergy toward the Patriarchate increased. On Easter Sunday 1860, a Bulgarian priest in Constantinople refused to pray for the Patriarchate and declined praying in Greek.³⁸ Similar acts of defiance occurred throughout the Bulgarian lands in the 1860s. Many Greek priests were forced to go elsewhere. Following Russia's Crimean setback, some Bulgarians opted to create a Unitarian Church that would recognize the Catholic Pope as its head. In turn, the Pope, with Austria and France behind him, would acknowledge this Unitarian Bulgarian Church, allowing the members to otherwise retain all of their Orthodoxy. Formed in 1861, the Unitarian movement received its strongest and longest lasting support in Macedonia.³⁹

Anxious to appease the Bulgarians, the Porte pressed for a compromise. In 1867, the Patriarchate agreed to an autonomous Bulgarian church (Exarchate), but the Bulgarians dismissed the proposal since this new Exarchate had no defined headquarters and there was explicate provision that the Bulgarians were to have no influence in Thrace and Macedonia.⁴⁰ Angered by the Greek uprising in Crete, the Porte issued a *firman* (decree) in 1870, creating a Bulgarian Exarchate which gave the Bulgarians control from the Danube to the plains to the south of the Balkan Mountains. A provision was included whereby the over sixty remaining dioceses, mostly in Thrace and Macedonia, could join the Bulgarian Exarchate if two-thirds of the population voted in favour of doing so. The *firman* of 1870 left a political question mark regarding Thrace and Macedonia, but the Bulgarians had their church. In response, the Patriarchate declared a schism, denouncing the Exarchate for phyletism, the sin of maintaining jurisdiction through ethnicity.⁴¹ However, in post 1848 Europe, ethnicity had come to matter more than dynastic

³⁷ Mercia MacDermott, *A History of Bulgaria 1393-1885*, 135. The Greek community in Plovdiv initially prevented the setting up of a Bulgarian school. Downriver in the town of Khaskovo, violent clashes resulted in the murder of a Bulgarian teacher.

³⁸ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 72.

³⁹ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 372.

⁴⁰ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 75. The Exarchate was not an independent church. The Exarch had rank between a archbishop and the patriarch. The Greek Patriarchate still took precedence over matters of doctrine and had the right to procure Holy Oil.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

authority, be it religious or political. A Liberal Westerner visiting the region in the 1870s would have determined that based on language, the Bulgarians constituted an ethnic group and deserved autonomy, if not statehood. The establishment of the Exarchate created an institution that could represent the Bulgarian nation. Still, for a growing number of young monks and teachers, this was not enough and they would be content with nothing less than independence. Some were ready to take up arms to realize their goal of Bulgarian independence.

Resistance to Ottoman rule in the Bulgarian lands increased in the 1860s. Previous opposition movements had been mainly led by peasants, but the Bulgarian resistance in the 1860s bore the mark of an educated generation as it was more broadly organized and led by an intellectual vanguard headed by craftsmen, merchants and teachers. This new movement was divided between those who advocated reform and those who aspired for independence. Reformers advocated pushing for further political autonomy, citing the success of the Exarchate. Those living in the south and in Constantinople tended to favour reform, while others living further north, and in other parts of Europe, particularly Bucharest, wanted independence. The Romanian capital became a haven for revolutionary activity as plots were hatched and armed men prepared to move south across the Danube.⁴²

The father of the new movement was Georgi Rakovski. Born in Kotel in 1821, Rakovski had his education divided between a local cell school and the worldlier atmosphere of one of the finest Greek schools in Constantinople. His contact with patriotic Greeks fuelled his Bulgarian nationalism. He tried to set up Bulgarian secret societies in Greece and Romania and spied for the Russians while serving as an aid to the Ottoman general staff during the Crimean War. He became a prolific writer while living in Belgrade in the 1860s before moving to Bucharest and forming the Bulgarian Secret Central Committee. Rakovski also organized armed groups to cross the Danube and fight guerrilla campaigns and inspire the Bulgarian people. By the time he died of tuberculosis

⁴² L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 376.

in 1867, Rakovski and his writing had inspired a new generation of committed revolutionaries.⁴³

The most famous leaders of this generation were Liuben Karavelov, Hristo Botev and Vasil Levski. All came from Balkan Mountain towns, had some Bulgarian secular education, spent some portion of their lives abroad and found employment for a time as teachers or writers. Born in Koprivshitsa in 1834, Karavelov developed a deep hatred of Greeks while boarding with a Greek family and attending a Helleno-Bulgarian school in Plovdiv that his father had put him in to aid the future commercial affairs of the family's cattle business. Beaten for low marks and for not speaking Greek, he soon quit and enrolled in the Bulgarian school. Karavelov went on to study literature in Moscow where he published articles on Bulgarian history and folklore and socialized with Russian revolutionaries. A deep believer in education, Karavelov once wrote: "For us, without freedom there is no education, and without education—no freedom."⁴⁴ In order for the Bulgarian and all Balkan Christians to rise up, he believed they had to first be educated by "apostles."

Hristo Botev was an apostle with a maverick nature. The son of a famous teacher from Kalofer, Botev went on to study in Odessa, immersing himself in Russian literature, nihilism and his own poetry. He taught school in Bessarabia, finding further inspiration in socialism and the Paris Commune. Upon return to Kalofer, Botev delivered a radical speech in the school courtyard that scared away most of the audience except for a few priests, teachers and young people. Soon Botev forsook his education in Odessa and moved to Romania, where he might have died in poverty had he not come into contact with Vasil Levski.

Levski has become the most famous of Bulgaria's revolutionaries for his mix of national ideals and strength of character. For a time in 1868, he and Botev lived in a windmill on the outskirts of Bucharest. While Botev bemoaned their poverty, Levski

⁴³ Rakovski recounted a summer he spent in the Balkan Mountains with a band of *hajduks* in his epic poem *The Forest Traveller*, which he wrote while hiding from the authorities in his sister's house in Kotel. In this work he articulated his vision of *hajduks* becoming revolutionary forces under the banner of 'Freedom or Death.'

⁴⁴ *Svoboda*, January, 1870, quoted in Mercia MacDermott, *The Apostle of Freedom, A Portrait of Vasil Levsky Against a Background of Nineteenth Century Bulgaria* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1967), 176.

quietly went about planning for revolution and singing to keep up morale.⁴⁵ Levski had attended cell and secular schools as a boy in his native Karlovo as his mother had wished him to become a priest or a teacher. He did both, first becoming a monk before leaving monastic life to gain military experience in the Bulgarian Legion's action in the 1862 conflict in Belgrade. But Levski found his true calling when he became a teacher. While working in two central Bulgarian villages between 1864 and 1866, Levski distinguished himself as an excellent teacher who, unusually, did not resort to corporal punishment. He also sang in the churches and captured the imagination of the villagers with his vision of a free Bulgaria. Additionally, Levski found time to organize clandestine, revolutionary activities and have farmers prepare foodstuffs for *hajduks* (bandits) in the mountains. During his final posting, Levski instructed the young people in gymnastics, marksmanship and stone throwing.⁴⁶

By Rakovski's standards, Levski was the perfect apostle. He would help instigate a revolt and would be the inspiration of a future generation of teacher revolutionaries over the mountains in Macedonia. Once, after giving a speech of a Bulgarian utopia, Levski stroked the heads of two children and prophetically said: "These will see freedom, but we are going to die."⁴⁷ He left teaching to pursue revolutionary activity, becoming a leading figure in the Bulgarian Revolutionary Central Committee after its founding in 1870. In 1872, he was arrested and, the following year, hanged in Sofia; the revolution had its martyr.

Frustration with the status quo grew as the prosperity the Bulgarians had enjoyed was vanishing in the 1870s. Free trade with the West hit craftsmen hard as markets and shops were flooded with cheap, factory produced products. When a tax revolt in Bosnia in 1875 led to war with Serbia, the Bulgarian revolutionaries thought their time had come. Simultaneously rising in four districts, the April Uprising of 1876 was a military disaster. Plovdiv was the only district where there was any sort of mass movement. For this act of defiance the Bulgarian Christians were slaughtered by vengeful local *bashibazouks* (Bulgarian Muslim militias) who had lost friends and family members in

⁴⁵ Ibid., 146.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 99.

⁴⁷ Sbornik, *Vasil Levsky* (Sofia, 1898), 148, quoted in Mercia MacDermott, *The Apostle of Freedom, A Portrait of Vasil Levsky Against a Background of Nineteenth Century Bulgaria*, 94.

the early stages of the uprising. While the rebellion was decisively crushed, the stories and images of heroic rebels fighting and losing battles as women and children were slaughtered by *bashibazouks* raised the level of national consciousness amongst the Christian Bulgarians to the point where the majority lost faith in the Porte's authority. Furthermore, these stories and images appalled Western Europe and brought the Bulgarian Question to the attention of the Great Powers.

Following some failed diplomacy, Russia invaded in the spring of 1877. After five months, Russian forces were able to break through Ottoman defences with some help from Bulgarian militia forces determined to realize liberation through Russian victory. In the subsequent Treaty of San Stefano, the boundaries of autonomous Bulgaria stretched from the Black Sea to Lake Ohrid and the territory between, including most of Macedonia. While it was a dream come true for Bulgarian nationalists, San Stefano alarmed Great Britain and Austria, neither of whom wished to see a massive Russian client straddling the Balkan Peninsula so close to the Dardanelle Straits. A new conference was called which produced the Treaty of Berlin. Autonomous San Stefano Bulgaria was reduced by some 62.5 percent.⁴⁸ The Borders were rolled back from the Aegean Sea and all of Macedonia reverted back to Ottoman Rule. While Berlin satisfied British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and British Conservatives, Bulgarians were very upset. Irredentist aspirations quickly materialized over Macedonia and Thrace, while the Serbs and Greeks began to take note.

American Print

The great demand for books in vernacular Bulgarian for use in the expanding number of schools throughout Bulgaria and Macedonia led to a curious but mutually beneficial relationship between Balkan patriots in need of books and earnest Protestant missionaries,⁴⁹ who had modern printing presses at their disposal. The Protestant interest and aid in the Bulgarian cause developed in conjunction with the Bulgarian national movement in the mid-nineteenth century. The missionaries interpreted the dissatisfaction

⁴⁸ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 85.

with the Greek Patriarchate as a spiritual vacuum they could fill. They would win few converts but, importantly, their presses produced the valuable mass quantities of schoolbooks and bibles needed to supply the expanding number of Bulgarian schools in Bulgaria and Macedonia. The Protestants also nurtured the Slavic languages by opening a small number of missionary schools, which attracted students by adopting a modern and mostly secular curriculum.

Protestant missionaries had a difficult time making converts in the Ottoman Empire. They elicited no interest from Jews, and Muslims daring to convert to Christianity would face the death penalty.⁵⁰ This left the Protestants to target the “Oriental Christians” of the Empire, which many of the nineteenth century sultans were willing to allow. Protestants gained some acceptance through promoting Greek language education during the Greek war of Independence in the 1820s. The Greeks were happy to allow the missionaries to deliver aid, build schools, supply newly bound textbooks and bibles and provide scholarships during the war and the early years of the Greek Kingdom. In time, censorship and resistance to Protestant proselytizing effectively ended Protestant efforts in the Greek Kingdom. As explained by James F. Clarke, the missionaries’ work, in terms of conversions, had been a monumental failure:

The labour of twenty-seven ordained missionaries of different denominations, the printing and distribution of 1,000,000 copies of books and tracts of which 200,000 were Scriptures, the education of a score of young Greeks in America, and more than 10,000 in American schools in Greece and Turkey had resulted in three certain conversions, of whom only two were Greeks, at a total expense of a quarter of a million dollars.⁵¹

Considering such disappointing results and the hostility of the Greek state and the Patriarchate, it is not surprising that the missionaries of the American Board in Greece believed Divine Providence was leading them away from the Greeks in 1843.⁵²

The missionary’s greatest asset was their printing presses. They brought a modern printing press to Malta in 1822 to print bibles and scripture in a dozen Mediterranean

⁴⁹ While British and Russian bible societies were present, American missionaries under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions were most prominent in much of the ‘Near East,’ so much so that Bulgarians came to associate Protestantism exclusively with Americans.

⁵⁰ Teresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair* (Toronto: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 4.

⁵¹ James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), 233-234.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 233.

languages. The press also produced Greek elementary school textbooks. The operation was expanded and moved to Smyrna and Beirut in 1834 to cope with the increasing demand.⁵³ Printing bibles in local languages was vital to Protestant missionary work since direct reading of the bible is the basis of Protestantism. Translation, promotion and distribution of a Bible in Bulgarian became an immediate need as the missionaries looked to extend their influence into the Balkan hinterlands, a need which coincided with the needs of nationalistic teachers.

Neofit Rilski was a man fit to undertake the biblical task of translation. Born in 1793 in the town of Bansko in eastern Macedonia, Rilski was educated at a Greek school in Melnik and became a learned Monk at the Rila Monastery near his hometown. An able linguist, Rilski was spotted by vodka merchant and Gabrovo school founder Vasil Aprilov, who sent Rilski to Bucharest for a year to learn Bell-Lancaster teaching methodology and translate textbooks into Bulgarian. Like Aprilov, Rilski believed Bulgarian textbooks and schools were needed more than churches and biblical translations,⁵⁴ though neither saw any need to supersede the Patriarchate.⁵⁵ Following his sojourn in Bucharest, Rilski made an agreement with E.B. Barker of the British and Foreign Bible and School Society to write scriptures in vernacular Bulgarian and produce a New Testament.⁵⁶ Rilski became the first teacher of the Gabrovo school in 1835 and worked on translations in his spare time. Thanks to his diligence, the American presses in Smyrna were soon turning out copies of the New Testament in Bulgarian in quality and quantities and far in excess of the modest Bulgarian presses.

The Bulgarians had been producing some of their own books through printing presses in Bucharest, Belgrade and Kragujevac in Serbia. The first press in Macedonia started publishing in the village of Vatosha in the southern Tikvish region in 1837. The press was moved to Thessaloniki in 1838, where it published a mere five books between 1838 and 1843 before it was destroyed by Greek monks.⁵⁷ Patriarch Grigorious VI had

⁵³ Ibid., 240.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 225.

⁵⁵ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 66. They advocated teaching Bulgarian in addition to Greek.

⁵⁶ James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria*, 226.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 267-268.

decreed that all translation of scripture be burned in 1836.⁵⁸ As discussed previously, the application of the decree varied from place to place. The Patriarchate may have been able to contain recalcitrant Bulgarian presses on its territory, but it could not contend with the Americans who had considerable resources and the permission of the Sultan. In 1843, the Patriarchate acquiesced and began to publish scripture in Bulgarian in its own presses in an effort to preserve control over its flock.⁵⁹ In 1860, Patriarch Joachim proposed allowing Bulgarian to be used in churches and schools.⁶⁰

Bulgarian authors flocked to Smyrna intent on publishing school textbooks. Most of these books were hasty translations of existing textbooks in languages such as Greek, French and English with added Bulgarian sections. For example, K.G. Fotinov's 1843 translation of an American geography textbook was more than twice the size of the original due to additional text and maps concerning the Balkans and Bulgaria.⁶¹ Due in part to Bulgarian demand, the American Board moved the presses to Constantinople in 1853.⁶²

Through the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s, the Americans could hardly keep up with the demand as the Bulgarians showed "the most extraordinary eagerness to possess the Word of God in their own spoken language."⁶³ One shipment of 2,000 New Testaments sold out in one week in a central Bulgarian town in 1842.⁶⁴ The English travellers Mackenzie and Irby sold out of their supply of Bulgarian New Testaments not long after they arrived in Veles in 1863 with the locals pleading for copies of the "whole Testament."⁶⁵ In their assessment of how the Great Powers were treating the Bulgarians, the two travellers gave the Americans the most favourable review:

As for the Americans, in a quiet way they are the best friends the Bulgarians have. Their eminent scholar, Dr. Riggs, has rendered the Old Testament from ancient

⁵⁸ Ibid., 235.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 271.

⁶⁰ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 373. The Bulgarian leadership replied that they would settle for nothing short of their own national church.

⁶¹ James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria*, 263. The maps were left in English.

⁶² Ibid., 268.

⁶³ Rev. H.G.O. Dwight, "European Turkey as a Field of Missions," in *Reports and Letters of American Missionaries Referring to the Distribution of Nationalities in the Former Provinces of European Turkey 1858—1918*, ed. Vladimir A. Tsanoff, 7 (Sofia, 1919).

⁶⁴ James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria*, 280.

⁶⁵ G. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe* (London: Daldy, Isbister and Co, 1877), 142.

into modern Slavonic, and numerous school-books have been translated from the English; American schools are in the Bulgarian principal towns and their books are sold by native colporteurs in several parts of the country.⁶⁶

American efforts continued with a complete Bulgarian Bible including the Old and New Testament published in New York in 1871; the same year a separate Bulgarian Mission was established. Yet, despite high sales figures and growing school attendance, the Americans were winning very few converts. One missionary recorded that the Bulgarians had “a very painful indifference” to religious matters.⁶⁷ In the town of Eski Zagra, a missionary school and twelve years of effort had only produced one Protestant.⁶⁸ An 1870 missionary report noted: “They regard their nation as bound together by their religion. How to be both a Bulgarian and a Protestant seems incomprehensible.”⁶⁹ The legacy of the old social order remained strong. “To leave the faith was treason.”⁷⁰

The Americans had understood the Bulgarians’ resistance to the Patriarchate as a spiritual vacuum they believed they could literally fill with bibles. The Protestants found themselves subsidizing a political movement centred on the spread of secular and national education. Many people were taking bibles and scriptures “because they were free or bought them because they were the cheapest Bulgarian reading matter.”⁷¹ Others looked to the Protestants for simple assistance and protection. For example, the missionaries in Thessaloniki were asked if Protestant converts received British military protection.⁷² Still, the Protestants kept producing literature in the vain hope of winning converts. They also established some thriving schools in places like Samokov and Rilski’s hometown of Bansko.

Protestant schools became very successful and influential when the missionaries made them more practical and secular. The Protestants adjusted their aim to not only

⁶⁶ Ibid., 80. It became a popular myth that Dr. Riggs was responsible for the translations. Riggs was the first American to learn Bulgarian, and while he had a hand in the editing process, Rilsiki performed the translating work.

⁶⁷ August 19, 1863 Archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, H 142, quoted in James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria*, 304.

⁶⁸ James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria*, 304.

⁶⁹ Eski Zagra, March 12, 1870 Archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, H 142, quoted in James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria*, 304.

⁷⁰ Teresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair*, 5.

⁷¹ James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria*, 303.

convert the “Oriental Christians,” but spread “superior American cultural and material values.”⁷³ The secular and modernizing values of the American middle class appealed to Orthodox Christians infinitely more than the plainness and temperance of Protestantism. In missionary schools, students could learn these popular values as well as the English language. The American Board Girl’s school at Samokov originally lost many of its students when the teachers attempted to proselytize the girls, forcing the school to close. The school re-opened with a more secular program and became a thriving success.⁷⁴ The missionary schools that succeeded avoided proselytism and kept prayer to a minimum.⁷⁵ Schools like the Hill School in Athens, Robert College in Constantinople and the boarding schools in Samokov appealed to the emerging merchant classes of the region who were anxious for their children to acquire a western education:

Frustrated in their political aspirations, new entrepreneurial, commercial and professional Christian elites of the empire sought other outlets for public recognition. They grew increasingly attracted to the western ideologies of nationalism, liberalism, constitutionalism, and sought a secular education, professional competence, and material prosperity. A growing number among them chose American missionary education as meeting these needs for their children, and in embracing that education exposed their children to American middle class values.⁷⁶

Robert College in Constantinople provided one of the most attractive educations in the Empire, and drew ambitious students from a number of national backgrounds, particularly Bulgarians. By the turn of the century, almost every Bulgarian statesman had been educated there.⁷⁷ For Muslims, the College was less attractive due to obligatory chapel and Sunday services.⁷⁸

For all the efforts the Protestants made, some patriots in Bulgaria and Macedonia resented the missionaries for not doing more to help them overtake the Patriarchate and

⁷² G. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, 82.

⁷³ Dimitra Giannuli, “Errand of Mercy”: American Woman Missionaries and Philanthropists in the Near East, 1820-1930,’ *Balkan Studies* 39, (1998): 223.

⁷⁴ Teresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair*, 5.

⁷⁵ Dimitra Giannuli, “Errand of Mercy”: American Woman Missionaries and Philanthropists in the Near East, 1820-1930,’ 229.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 234.

⁷⁷ Anonymous [aka a Diplomatist], *Nationalism and War in the Near East*, ed. Lord Courtney of Penwith (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), xviii.

⁷⁸ Lucy M. J. Garnett, *Turkish Life in Town and Country* (London: G.P. Putman’s Sons, 1905), 204.

bring liberation.⁷⁹ The American Board had to strike a difficult balance as their conviction was inherently prejudiced against the Muslim Ottoman Empire, yet without the Porte's approval, they could not do their work. The relationship became more difficult in 1894 when the Porte suspected the Americans of complicity in the Armenian Revolt. In time, as in Greece, increased secular, state authorities had little use for the missionaries. In the inter-war period, the missionary presence in the region was reduced to a few schools.⁸⁰

In addition to contributing to the national inquiry in the Bulgarian lands, the Protestant schools also brought secular, western values to the emerging Christian middle classes in the Ottoman Empire. Many graduates of Protestant schools gained positions of political power in emergent governments and formed the organizational brain trust of the successive national uprisings in Greece, Bulgaria and later Macedonia. Critically, the missionaries gave the Bulgarians the books and bibles necessary to carry out a national campaign through churches and schools in Bulgaria and Macedonia. After having much of Macedonia taken away from them in 1878, the Bulgarians were eager to establish their presence in the disputed territory. The Exarchate schools gave the Bulgarians the means to deliver their message and the American presses ensured they had the necessary schoolbooks to inspire the masses through education.

Stirrings in the Disputed Land: Macedonia pre-1878

Although Macedonia gained renown for being the focus of several competing interests after the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, the competition to win over the territory's population developed along with the Bulgarian struggle during the preceding decades. However, in Macedonia, it was not a simple case of Bulgarian elements struggling against Greek and Ottoman authority. Because of Macedonia's place at the crossroads of the south Balkans, the Greeks and Bulgarians were not alone in the struggle to influence the population.

⁷⁹ James F. Clarke, *Bible Societies, American Missionaries and the National Revival of Bulgaria*, 303.

⁸⁰ Dimitra Giannuli, "Errand of Mercy": American Woman Missionaries and Philanthropists in the Near East, 1820-1930,' 259.

Greek historian Evangelos Kofos divides nineteenth century Ottoman Macedonia into three horizontal zones of influence. The southernmost zone, from the Nidza Mountains to Thessaly, including the coast, was predominantly under Greek influence. The northern zone, Skopje and the valleys running east and west from it, Kofos considers primarily under Serb control. Between these two was the highly contested central zone through the key towns of Ohrid, Bitola, Prelip, Veles and Stip where Bulgarian, Greek and Serb spheres of influence intersected and no one group dominated. While accurate in general, Kofos seems to overstate Greek and Serb predominance in the north and south.⁸¹ Bulgarian agitators were competing with the Serbs in the Skopje area and further north into Southern Serbia and Kosovo. Bulgarian influence extended below the Nidza mountains right into the city of Thessaloniki, which was mainly Jewish. There were Albanian and Vlach populations in much of the west of the territory, which would gain their own schools and nationalism. In addition, considerable populations of Muslims existed throughout Macedonia that were loyal to the Porte. In short, Kofos' central zone best describes the majority of Geographic Macedonia. In all but the coastal regions, this was contested land.

After the Bulgarian and Serbian national churches were closed in 1766 and 1767, the Greek Patriarchate enjoyed complete ecclesiastical and educational control over all the Christians in Macedonia. In this position of dominance in the theocratic order, the Patriarchate had little incentive to force the predominantly Slavic population to learn Greek. As in the Bulgarian lands to the east, wealthier Slavs were sending their sons to Greek schools in the towns because a Greek education had a high social standing.⁸² Through education, upwardly mobile Slavs became Greeks.⁸³ The Patriarchate enjoyed complete control over the Christian *millet* and was content to rest on its laurels. But many of its flock were not satisfied living perpetually under Patriarchal and Ottoman dominance as news of revolutionary Europe reached them.

⁸¹ Evangelos Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia, Civil Conflict, Politics of Mutation, National Identity* (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1993), 24.

⁸² Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia 1897-1913* (Thessaloniki: Museum of the Macedonian Struggle, 1993), 19.

⁸³ Anastasia n. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood. Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia 1870-1990*, 74.

Resistance began in the church as Slav speakers produced a few publications based on the western dialect spoken in the Ohrid region. Interestingly, the first publication in this language was a quadrilingual word list (*Tetraglossen*) produced to assist in the Hellenizing of the Albanians, Aromainians (Romanians) and Slavs. Published in Venice in 1794, the Slavic section was written by the priest Stefan of Ohrid.⁸⁴ Subsequent books published in the local vernacular from 1794-1840 were in opposition to Old Church Slavonic as well as Greek. In this regard, there is a similarity to the work of Serbs of the same period to establish a more accessible literature based on the spoken word of the people. The authors of these works called the language they wrote in Bulgarian.⁸⁵ From the outset, there were differences between the western dialect of Macedonia and the eastern dialect of Gabrovo, which would become codified Bulgarian. However, most literary and educational activity that developed through the mid-nineteenth century is perhaps best seen in the context of “Slavic” as most of the focus was on opposition to Greek dominance.

Much of the “awakening” in Macedonia through the first half of the nineteenth century mirrored developments in the Bulgarian lands to the east. As in the east, prosperity increased the demand for education and some of the more wealthy merchants in places like Ohrid and Veles sent their children further afield for education through the 1830s and 1840s. The first wave of leading figures discovered nationalism via their experience in Greek education and the Slavic influence of Russia. The visit of Russian professor Victor Grigorovic from the University of Kazan in 1844-45 sparked local inquiry into Bulgarian language and history. Inspired by European Romantic sentiment and Slavic intellectual circles in places like Bucharest and Prague, Russian academics had begun to take interest in the southern Slavs of the Balkans.⁸⁶ This inquiry led them to Macedonia and places such as Ohrid, where the monks Cyril and Methodius had established the Cyrillic alphabet in the ninth century. While Grigorovic found no shortage

⁸⁴ Victor A. Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity,” in *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics*, ed. Victor Roudometof, 176 (Boulder: Eastern European Monographs, 2000).

⁸⁵ Victor A. Friedman, “Macedonian,” in *The Slavonic Languages*, ed. Bernard Comrie and Greville G. Corbett, 250 (London and New York: Routledge, 1993). ‘Bulgarian’ and ‘Slavic’ are used interchangeably here to refer to the Slavic language and population of Macedonia.

⁸⁶ Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos, *The Bulgarian National Awakening and its Spread into Macedonia* (Thessaloniki: Society for Macedonian Studies, 1990), 28.

of Slavonic texts in the monasteries, he found the Slavic language largely confined to the private sphere of homes and informal social gatherings. To his disappointment, many could not read Slavonic, and literacy in Ohrid was Greek language literacy.⁸⁷ The professor spoke frequently of the glory of Slavism and medieval Bulgaria while telling all Slavic speakers that they were Bulgarians and they should be educated accordingly. His sermons made a strong impression on teacher Demetrius Miladinidis, who was to champion the cause of “awakening” the Slavs of Macedonia in the coming years.

Miladinidis was raised in a Slav speaking household in the Western Macedonian town of Struga just north of Ohrid. A promising student, he was enrolled in a Greek school before travelling south to Ioannina to satisfy his appetite for more challenging studies as a secondary school student. An enthusiastic Hellenist, Miladinidis taught Greek in towns across southern Macedonia. His brother, Constantine, studied at the University of Athens and joined him in the teaching ranks. It was while teaching in Ohrid in 1844 that Demetrius was visited by the pan-slavist, Grigorovic. Calling Demetrius his brother and convincing him of the validity of the racial theories of Fallmerayer⁸⁸ and the ambition and might of Russia, Grigorovic literally changed Demetrius Miladinidis the Hellenist to Dimitri Miladinov the Bulgarian Russophile.⁸⁹ Constantine too became impressed and went on to intern at the Zograf Monastery on Mt. Athos before attending Moscow University.⁹⁰

While the brothers famously collected and published some 600 Slavic folk songs, they made their most significant contributions in the classroom. Teaching in Greek schools, the brothers worked covertly to find and create books and materials in any relevant Slavic languages as they preached the glory of Slavic language and history and urged current and former pupils to follow their lead. Naturally, they ran afoul of their Greek employers and were dismissed from a succession of schools in Ohrid, Prelep, Bitola and Edessa. Dimitri Miladinov made a powerful impression while teaching in the prosperous town of Kilkis in the late 1850s. Taking advantage of the fact that the local

⁸⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 31. Fallmerayer theorized that the Slav invasions had led to the disappearance of the Greek race. The people of Macedonia, therefore, had close blood and cultural ties to the Slavs of the East.

⁸⁹ Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict. Greece, Bulgaria and the Macedonian Question* (Westport Connecticut, London: Praeger Publications, 2002), 91.

⁹⁰ Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos, *The Bulgarian National Awakening and its Spread into Macedonia*, 32.

Greek Bishop was rather sympathetic, passive and lived in another town, the teacher transformed the cultural life of the town. Church services were soon conducted exclusively in Old Slavonic. Miladinov was said to have taught children in the mornings, then taught married people, craftsmen and priests in the afternoon and devoted his evening hours to studying Bulgarian history.⁹¹ Such was the enthusiasm for learning that citizens reportedly paid voluntary fines for uttering Greek in public.⁹² The money raised was used to fund schools. Russian diplomat Egor Yuzhakov, visiting Kilkis in the winter of 1858-1859, was so impressed by the zeal for education that he penned: "I now regard the Bulgarians as a people with a rich potential for good, not to say greatness."⁹³ Yuzhakov and his colleague, Alexander Rachinsky, quietly awarded scholarships to Russian universities on the recommendations of local teachers.⁹⁴ Kilkis became a hotbed of Bulgarian nationalism and was one of the first districts in Macedonia to vote to join the Exarchate in 1875.⁹⁵ The agitating and propagating work of the Miladinov brothers eventually caught up with them as Greek Bishops denounced them to the Ottoman authorities in 1861. The brothers died of typhus in a Constantinople prison in January of 1862. But death brought only martyrdom.

The Patriarchate had decreed to burn all translations of scripture and several Greek bishops met the promotion of the Slavic language and literature with force. Returning to Ohrid from studying the "the Slavic language" in Constantinople in 1860, the poet Grigor Prlichev was jailed by the Greek bishop for opposing Greek dominance in education in Macedonia.⁹⁶ Panaretoff writes of campaigns by Greek monks on Mount Athos to burn texts in Old Slavonic.⁹⁷ The English travellers, Muir—Mackenzie and Irby give record of an account of the Greek bishop of Veles in the 1830s overseeing a bonfire burning of all Slavonic books in the centre of the town.⁹⁸ However, Greek oppression was

⁹¹ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death, The Life of Gotse Delchev* (London and West Nyack: The Journeyman Press, 1978), 17.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 18.

⁹³ *Sovremennik*. Book 10. 1860, quoted in Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death, The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 18.

⁹⁴ Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos, *The Bulgarian National Awakening and its Spread into Macedonia*, 34.

⁹⁵ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death, The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 25.

⁹⁶ Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict, Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 62-63.

⁹⁷ Stephen Panaretoff, *Near Eastern Affairs and Conditions*, 48.

⁹⁸ G. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, 138.

not systematic and varied from location to location. Slavic texts survived, translations were made and the number of Slavic language schools grew to around 400 by 1876;⁹⁹ two years before the establishment of autonomous Bulgaria and before the large scale plan to extend Exarchate schools in Macedonia. Much of the impetus to open these schools was, therefore, local. In better-off towns like Veles, Kilkis and Prelip the Slavs were exerting their influence on the Patriarchate and the Ottoman authorities for Slavonic church services and, of course, for Slavic language instruction in the schools.

Some 120 kilometres north of Kilkis, the town of Veles is situated in a gorge near the confluence of the Vardar and Bregalnica rivers. At the northeast of Kofos' central zone,¹⁰⁰ Veles was subject to Serbian and Bulgarian influences from up the valleys. Like Kilkis, Veles prospered through the middle decades of nineteenth century and developed a Slav speaking merchant class that became interested in having its sons well educated. Because of their financial power, the Slav notables had been able to retain a series of Greek bishops through the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century who allowed church choirs to sing in Slavonic. According to Vemund Aarbakke, when Bulgarian schools were established in the 1830s and 1840s, the bishops did not react for fear of provoking the Christian Slav community which, by Mackenzie-Muir and Irby's estimates, accounted for 3,000 of the town's 4,000 households in 1863.¹⁰¹ Some of the bishops even made an effort to learn Bulgarian.¹⁰² Conciliation and mutual respect prevailed.

The political and educational climate changed in Veles in 1856 when more nationalistic work by the Slavic teacher Jordan Djinot provoked the ire of the resident Greek bishop, Ignatija. The bishop reportedly summoned the community leaders and

⁹⁹ Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict. Greece, Bulgaria and the Macedonian Question*, 92. According to Roudometof, there were an undetermined number of Serbian schools and 350 Bulgarian schools. However, Roudometof does not indicate whether these were the Exarchate's schools or Bulgarian language schools in general. Likely, the majority were Exarchate schools, but Uniate and local schools with instruction in the Bulgarian language could also be counted in this number.

¹⁰⁰ Evangelos Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, 24.

¹⁰¹ G. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, 138.

¹⁰² Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 37.

exclaimed: “Kick that skirt chasing teacher out, that Jordan bastard pimp faggot!”¹⁰³ A year later, Djino, who had been teaching in Veles for some twenty years, escalated the conflict by banning the singing of Greek in church and forbidding the presence of any Greek teachers in his part of the town.¹⁰⁴ The next Greek bishop, Bishop Antim, made some conciliatory gestures towards the moderate Bulgarian teachers. However, Antim spoke only Greek and lost the respect of the Bulgarian and later the Turkish community leaders through greed and intrigue.¹⁰⁵ Antim denounced the Bulgarian teachers to the Grand Vezir upon his visit to Veles in 1861. While this led to Djino’s deportation to Asia Minor, Antim was then locked in continual conflict with the Bulgarian and, importantly, the Turkish community on account of his repeated and blatant lying.

Bishop Antim was at least correct in realizing the Bulgarian teachers were his sworn enemies in a power struggle for control of the hearts and minds of Veles. As Aarbakke explains, the Bulgarian teachers cut right into the power base of the Greek bishops in the Ottoman *millet* system that put all Macedonia’s Orthodox Christians under authority of the Greek Patriarchate. By promoting a national identity based on language, the Bulgarian teachers would force the Patriarchate to hire priests and bishops that spoke Bulgarian:

The teachers were thus waging a battle to limit the Patriarchate’s influence over those they were unable to attract to the Bulgarian cause through education. This made the Bulgarian teachers anti-Greek and anti-Patriarchate at the same time. The Bulgarian teachers represent a breach with the established order and hierarchy. There was no longer any desire to work within the Orthodox millet. Instead they viewed the population according to different principles which challenged the Slav-speaking population’s adherence to the Patriarchate.¹⁰⁶

Antim’s reporting that the Bulgarians were conspiring against him in 1868 became his downfall. Because of the bishop’s chronic malice and unpopularity, the Turkish community leaders defended the Bulgarians. For good measure, a Bulgarian teacher showered the inspecting Ottoman pasha from Bitola with a speech of praise in Turkish

¹⁰³ Blazhe Koneski and Olivera Jasar-Nasteva, *Makedonski tekstovi 10-20 vek* (Skopje: Sojuzut na drustvata za makedonski jazik i literatura, 1966), 88-89, quoted in Victor A. Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity,” 179. Djino, like the Miladinov brothers, is a national figure in both Bulgarian and Macedonian national history.

¹⁰⁴ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 38.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

and had his pupils sing Turkish songs for the pasha and his party of soldiers.¹⁰⁷ Antim was forced to resign and Veles ejected its Greek bishop two years before the establishing of the Exarchate. A new generation of teachers, raised on the heroic work of the Miladinov brothers, was generating great enthusiasm for Slavic language education and spreading nationalism. Visitors could not help but notice.

In their travels through the Macedonian hinterland in the 1860s, Mackenzie and Irby crossed through towns where they found a yearning for Bulgarian, or at least bilingual, instruction. At the town of Yenidje, near Edessa, their “informant” explained to them: “We are not rich enough to build a second school, and since the bishop forces us to keep up the Greek one all we now ask is that his teacher should also know Bulgarian.”¹⁰⁸ In another town, a notable pleaded to them: “Our land is baptized, but we have no teacher who can instruct us or translate for us the sacred books...send us teachers who may explain to us the Scriptures.”¹⁰⁹ A widower they met solemnly explained his resolve to educate his son: “When my wife died and left me but one son I resolved not to marry again, but to give all my money to this school.”¹¹⁰ Upon arrival in Veles in the midst of the eight-year power struggle between Bishop Antim and the Bulgarian teachers, the Englishwomen found that the majority of the townspeople were demanding religious services and education in Bulgarian.¹¹¹ They were informed of the “Bulgarian movement” by the schoolmaster of one of the two Bulgarian schools in the town. The remainder of the load of books and bibles (in Bulgarian) they had brought up from a mission in Thessaloniki quickly sold out. The schoolmaster even became angry with them for not bringing a larger supply.¹¹² Distant missionary presses and local teachers and writers were doing their best to meet the demand. A small explosion of Bulgarian language primers, textbooks and literary translations flooded onto the Macedonian market in the 1860s and 1870s, provoking more questions of language, nationality and identity.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 40.

¹⁰⁸ G. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, 94.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 35.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 81.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 140.

¹¹² Ibid., 142.

Bulgarian or Macedonian?

Was the Slavic movement in Macedonia purely Bulgarian or something uniquely Macedonian? The best answer might be, 'yes.' Aarbakke and Hugh Poulton, downplay any difference, arguing that the important distinction was between Greeks and Slavs. This was certainly true in the early going, but, by the 1860s, a new generation had been educated in Slavic schools and national and regional question had arisen. Pre-1860, those who wrote in the western (Macedonian) dialect considered that they were writing in the purest Bulgarian, descended down from the medieval glory of hallowed Ohrid. As the primers written in the Gaborvo dialect of the east made their way west in the 1830s and 1840s, scholars in the west countered by producing books based on the local dialect that students and parents could more readily understand. These included books by Djino that contained "a fair number of Europeanisms"¹¹³ The most prominent textbook writer pre-1860 was Partenij Zografski who published two textbooks in Constantinople in 1857 and 1858.¹¹⁴ Although Zografski advocated the formal establishment of one hybrid Bulgarian language, he believed it should be based on the western (Macedonian) dialect. Writers in the east who were willing to compromise believed Bulgarian still had to be based on the eastern dialect. They interpreted Zografski's language as a mixture of Bulgarian and Serbian and called him an Albanian.¹¹⁵ The poet Grigor Prlichev, who had been imprisoned for provoking the Greek Bishop of Ohrid, had his translation of the *Iliad* rejected by Bulgarian critics because of the poor quality of his Bulgarian.¹¹⁶ After 1856, the Society for Bulgarian Literature aggressively promoted the eastern dialect as literary Bulgarian. To the resentment of those in Macedonia, there was to be no compromise.¹¹⁷

The codification of the eastern dialect as literary Bulgarian inspired an explosion of textbooks and literature in the western dialect and gradual crystallization of a provincial Bulgarian or Macedonian identity in the 1860s and 1870s. Another Ohrid

¹¹³ Blazhe Koneski, "Macedonian," in *The Slavic Literary Languages*, ed. Alexander M. Schenker and Edward Stankiewicz, 57 (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International and Area Studies, 1980). Koneski attributes this to a break with traditional religious influences and a turn toward Romantic Europe by Djino and an emergent educated class.

¹¹⁴ Victor A. Friedman, "The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity," 180.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict, Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*, 62.

native, Kuzman Sapkarev, a student of Zografski, published textbooks in the western dialect which were reportedly well-received by local parents who could better understand their children's reading of the texts at home. Sapkarev convinced some schools to send the Bulgarian textbooks back they had ordered and replaced them with his books. A scathing anonymous letter in a Constantinople newspaper, claiming that Sapkarev's language was full of local, Albanian and Hellenic lexical impurities, turned out to have been written by the Veles book dealer who had had to take back all of the returned books. Obviously, there were economic factors to consider in this case. Nevertheless, by the 1860s and 1870s, a generation of local men had come to form a local middle class of teachers and many of them did not see the literary Bulgarian from the east as their language. According to Friedman, a growing number of teachers throughout Macedonia began declaring themselves as "purely Macedonian" during this time. One of the more vocal and industrious, Gorgi Pulevski, published three textbooks and a grammar of the "Macedonian Slavic population."¹¹⁸

In the historiography of post war Socialist Republic of Macedonia and the present Republic of Macedonia, the outpouring of textbooks and statements of distinct Macedonianess constitutes the arrival of coherent and cohesive Macedonian nationalism by the 1870s. While the feelings of Macedonianess could be interpreted as local political reaction to the chauvinism of Bulgarian literary critics and some abusive Greek Bishops, there is evidence that the Macedonian movement had some cohesion. In addition to the proclamations and pedagogical publications, several districts in Macedonia demonstrated defiance not only to the Greek Patriarchate but also to the Bulgarian Exarchate by opting to join the Uniate church. While this association with Catholicism had been used throughout Bulgaria and Macedonia as a political tool to gain a Bulgarian Exarchate, the Uniate church's stronghold was in western Macedonia. Muir-McKenzie and Irby found the only Bulgarian school in Ohrid on their 1863 visit "belonged to Unionists, and was superintended by a priest from Brittany, assisted by a native schoolmaster."¹¹⁹ As the lobbying for an Exarchate was primarily a religious front for Bulgarian nationalism, the

¹¹⁷ Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict*, 92.

¹¹⁸ Victor A. Friedman, "The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity," 183.

strong Uniate following in Macedonia indicates a challenge to eastern based Bulgarian literary, religious and political dominance. According to Friedman, the first council of the Bulgarian Exarchate tried to exclude Macedonian representatives, fearing they would create a separate hierarchy or move the seat of the Exarchate to Ohrid.¹²⁰ Perhaps because of this snub, six Macedonian eparchies (dioceses) abandoned the Exarchate to seek a permanent national solution through Uniatism and Protestantism.¹²¹ Republic of Macedonia historian Blazhe Ristovski notes that the Austrian consul Lippich reported that the “Skopje Bulgarians” were asserting separate distinctions from “true Bulgarians,” especially in Veles.¹²² Additionally, Ristovski quotes at length correspondence from Exarchate priests sent into Macedonia after 1873 to win back the territory from “Uniates or Papists.” Ristovski cites Hroch’s theory and considers that agitation through the 1860s and 1870s had set the stage for a distinctly Macedonian uprising in 1876.¹²³

While there is merit to claims of a distinct identity forming amongst some of Macedonia’s Slavic population at that time, it difficult to conclude definitively that a “mass movement” had emerged. Historians from various nationalities acknowledge the relative dearth of widely accessible documentation from this period. Ristovski admits that Macedonian national development through the nineteenth century was a “long and convulsive and process.”¹²⁴ Although there were elements of a Macedonian national movement, this Macedonian nationalism had an on-again off-again relationship with Bulgarian nationalism. Whatever their flag, nationalists of strict conviction were predominantly educated men and elites. Shifting loyalties, widespread bilingualism and local anomalies were commonplace amongst the mixed populations of Macedonia. For instance, the Exarchate’s campaign against Uniatism in the mid-1870s had some success, even in Veles.¹²⁵ Mackenzie and Irby reported the presence of a Serbian headmaster at a Bulgarian school in Prelip who claimed “the children could read his language as well as

¹¹⁹G. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, 106. Muir-Mackenzie and Irby also visited a Uniate school in Monastir (Bitola).

¹²⁰ Victor A. Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity,” 183.

¹²¹ Blazhe Ristovski, *Macedonia and the Macedonian People* (Vienna and Skopje: SIMAG Holding, 1999), 134.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 142.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 151.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 142.

his own.”¹²⁶ In Ohrid, they noted that apart from one Uniate school, Greek schools dominated the town.¹²⁷ This is confirmed by Edith Durham’s reference to the records of the 1868 visit to Ohrid by a Mr. Von Hahn who “found one Slav school and four Greek, and the people expressed their preference for the Greek party.”¹²⁸ All one can conclude is that three different towns had local distinctions and were all comprised of mixed populations.

The likelihood is that some of Macedonia’s Slavs considered themselves Macedonians, others Bulgarians, others Greeks and still others Serbs, depending on where they lived, where, or whether, they had gone to school and where they were sending their children to school. Schools were still relatively few in number and confined primarily to the towns. Thousands of Slavs worked the land and lived in small villages likely unaware or disinterested in the arguments over grammar and textbooks that consumed the fancily dressed teachers and writers of the towns. In the villages, identity remained rooted in religion. After Macedonia reverted back to Ottoman control following a brief Bulgarian tenure between the Treaties of San Stefano and Berlin in 1878, the teachers of various nationalities and organizations would beat paths to the villages, establishing hundreds of schools throughout Macedonia in the decades to follow. Full of irredentism, the Bulgarians would take the lead in the escalating education race for Macedonia.

Conclusion

The Ottoman Empire’s stake in Europe survived the events of 1878, but it was becoming increasingly apparent that the Empire’s hold in Europe would not last much longer. It was a certainty that in time a Great Power would be tempted to intervene in the Balkans to further its own interests on behalf of a Balkan Christian population. Balkan Christian leaders recognized the value of outside intervention and understood how to build a revolutionary movement. Balkan intellectuals no longer needed to look to distant European nations, but merely to neighbouring countries where respective successions of

¹²⁶ G. Mackenzie and A.P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, 131.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 106.

inquirers, awakeners, educators, organizers, heroes and martyrs had created autonomous regions and states and had themselves become the fathers of modern European nations. This process was about to repeat itself in Macedonia. However, the crossroads of the Balkans had the additional dynamic of being the land where the national imaginations and irredentist aspirations of Bulgarians, Serbs and Greeks overlapped. Though weakened, the Ottoman Empire was determined to hold its last stake in Europe. Great Power statesmen pored over maps. In 1878, the Macedonian Question was flung open and the struggle escalated.

¹²⁸ M. Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans* (London, Edinburgh, Dublin and New York: Thomas Nelson, Sons, 1905), 203.

Chapter III: The Education Race

The Starting Line

In 1878, a regional struggle in the southern Balkans quickly developed into an issue of Great Power interest and security. The “Macedonian Question” would remain a matter of regional and international concern well into the twentieth century. The struggle for Macedonia escalated after the Bulgarian gains in Macedonia, granted in the Treaty of San Stefano, were reversed at the insistence of the Great Britain and Austria in the 1878 Treaty of Berlin. As a result, the Ottoman Empire remained in seemingly precarious possession of a collection of European territories. The centrepiece of these territories was Macedonia. A predicament arose from the fact that Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria had overlapping historical claims to Macedonia. Heightened irredentism exacerbated the political volatility caused by recent events in these countries. However, without Great Power support, none of the Balkan states had the military resources to unilaterally dislodge the Ottomans from Macedonia. Prospects of an alliance between Belgrade, Athens and Sofia were impossible owing to conflicting claims to Macedonia. Thus, the Balkan states were left to wage a propaganda war for the hearts, minds and tongues of the Macedonian peasants through their respective schools. These schools not only infused nationalism into apparently nation-less peasant children; they also served as a means of legitimizing a given country’s territorial claim to Great Power observers.¹ As described by British folklorist G.F. Abbott, the circumstances of the competition created a propaganda race:

The Macedonian peasants themselves—excepting those in the south whose Hellenic nationality has never been disputed—can hardly be said to possess any national soul, or, for that matter, any soul at all. If they are caught young by the Bulgarian propaganda, and then reared in its school, they are imbued with the idea

¹ Education became increasingly vital to national claims since, as discussed in Chapter I, language had become the arbitrating factor in determining nationality.

that they are Bulgarians. If the Servians are first in the field, they become Servians. The race is to the swift and to the rich.²

The ensuing education race would feature a host of rivals. With the help of large numbers of school textbooks and the infrastructure of the Exarchate, the Bulgarians had been propagating their nationalism for some time in Macedonia and would step up their efforts post 1878. The Patriarchate and the Greek State would take measures to meet the Bulgarian challenge, at times working with a Serbian educational campaign orchestrated by the foreign office in Belgrade. Romania would also try to extend its influence by setting up schools. Macedonia's Albanian and Jewish populations also worked to establish and reform their respective schools. The Porte strategically allowed the educational competition for its Christian subjects to escalate because it hoped the Christians would remain divided and in conflict with one another. Furthermore, education was largely denied to the Muslims of the Empire as the Porte wished to retain Muslim loyalty through privilege and ignorance.

Through the 1880s and 1890s the race to establish schools reached frenzied proportions. Competing parties courted the crucial favour of the Porte and increasingly resorted to desperate measures to establish schools and attract students. While the establishment of so many schools could not help but raise literacy and numeracy levels in Macedonia, it must be reemphasized that the education race was foremost a propaganda war for future control of Macedonia. As R.W. Seton-Watson explains:

The schools and churches, then, became the main weapons of political propaganda, and outbid each other for popularity among the inhabitants. Children became a valuable commodity for which the rival agitators paid in hard cash...³

The brightest of these children often were given the chance to further their education in Sofia, Belgrade or Athens. Many returned to Macedonia as teachers to teach new generations of children "their history." In time, some Exarchate teachers would go a step further and form an organization that advocated an autonomous Macedonia for the Macedonians.

² G.F. Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour in Macedonia* (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), 81.

³ R.W. Seton Watson, *The Rise of Nationality in the Balkans* (London: Constable and Company Limited, 1917), 129-130.

The Bulgarian Advance post 1878

As decreed by the Great Powers in the 1878 Berlin Treaty, the autonomous principality of Bulgaria came into existence as a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. Four months earlier, Russian armies had fought through to the Aegean Sea, creating a greater Bulgarian state through the Treaty of San Stefano. However, an enlarged Russian client state on the shores west of the Dardanelles alarmed Greece and Great Britain, prompting the Berlin revisions that were brokered by Otto Von Bismarck. The result was a much-reduced Bulgaria, comprising only 37.5% of the Greater Bulgaria of San Stefano. Across the Bulgarian lands, the mood went from utter jubilation to stunned defeat.⁴ Abruptly deprived of Eastern Rumelia to its south and Macedonia to its west, “The new Bulgarian state was to enter into life with a ready-made program for territorial expansion and a burning sense of the injustice meted out by the great powers.”⁵ Without the means and support to launch invasions, the Bulgarian Principality turned to the education system of the Exarchate in Constantinople in order to win back lost territory. The Bulgarians enjoyed relatively quick success in Eastern Rumelia, but their campaign in Macedonia soon met with resistance from the Porte and the Greek Patriarchate, both of whom feared the rapid expansion of a Russian-backed Bulgaria. It took the independent policies of Prime Minister Stefan Stambolov to gain the favour of the Porte and facilitate the rapid increase of Exarchist schools in Ottoman Macedonia between 1887 and 1900. However, Stambolov’s policies were not enough for impatient nationalists spoiling for war with the Porte. The promotion of Bulgarian education also inspired a Macedonian movement with ideas and strategies of its own.

A Bulgarian assembly met at the medieval capital of Turnovo in February of 1879 to constitute the political structure of the new principality. Deputies from the Turkish, Greek and Jewish minorities and several deputies from Macedonia were present, with teachers comprising the largest professional group.⁶ The assembly’s consolidation measures reflected irredentist feelings and a decidedly Russian influence. Gratitude to Russia and the Russian military presence in the principality led to the adoption of the

⁴ Martin V. Pundeff, “Bulgarian Nationalism” in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, ed Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer, 120 (London and Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969).

⁵ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 85.

Russian educational and financial systems.⁷ Free primary education became the law for girls and boys.⁸ All children would not only obtain basic literacy, but would also learn a standard, nationalist curriculum which taught them that the Treaty of Berlin had deprived their country of its rightful claim to Macedonia. The “Greater Bulgaria” of San Stefano was aligned with the kingdom of medieval Bulgaria, which had encompassed most of geographic Macedonia.

The importance of re-obtaining Macedonia and Eastern Rumelia prompted the political decision to move the capital from Turnovo to the more westerly city of Sofia.⁹ Lacking Great Power support for a military offensive to drive out the Ottomans, the Bulgarians pursued a two-pronged strategy. First, they lobbied the Porte and the Great Powers for full implementation of Articles 23 and 62 of the Berlin Treaty. These articles respectively called for more native representation and the banning of religious discrimination in Macedonia. Second, they exploited the presence of the Exarchate within the Ottoman Empire to further the establishment of more bishoprics, and hence, more schools in Macedonia. For this reason, the Bulgarian principality lobbied to have its spiritual head remain outside its borders. The Porte made several unsuccessful attempts to have the Exarchate moved to the Bulgarian principality.¹⁰ In 1882, the Russians lobbied for Bulgarian schools in Macedonia to become the responsibility of Sofia. Again, the Bulgarians objected as they well knew the Ottoman *millet* system functioned as a means by which to continue to legally establish schools in Ottoman controlled Macedonia.¹¹ For the first decade after the Treaty of Berlin, the creation of schools was left up to the Exarchate as Sofia focused on the territory of Eastern Rumelia immediately south of the

⁶ Richard J. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1918 A History*, 32. Teachers made up 60 of the 230 delegates.

⁷ R. W. Seton-Watson, *The Rise of Nationality in the Balkans* (London: Constable and Company, 1917), 116.

⁸ Richard J. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1918 A History*, 202. Crampton also notes the significance of national service for young men as it took them away from their traditional extended family communities (*zadruga*) during their formative years and exposed them to a wider, more individualistic world which put many of them at odds with the traditionalism of their families.

⁹ Martin V. Pundeff, “Bulgarian Nationalism,” 123.

¹⁰ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 64-65. While the Porte curtailed the Exarchate’s ability to maintain schools in Macedonia, it stopped short of forcing the Exarchate to relocate to Sofia. For the Bulgarians, the Exarchate provided spiritual unity in the absence of political unity. Likely, the Porte did not wish to completely alienate and anger the Bulgarians for fear of provoking further of provoking more conflict and another intervention by Russia.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 82.

Balkan Mountains. This did not sit well with many of the angry young men left under the Ottoman yoke in Macedonia.

Armed resistance to the reestablishment of the Porte's authority in Macedonia began before the Bulgarians had convened the Turnovo assembly. The uprisings were poorly planned and lacked the level of backing from the Bulgarian Principality and Russia necessary for them to succeed against the Ottoman forces. The 1882 Kresna Uprising in the Struma Valley near the Bulgarian border was initially successful with the rebels briefly holding the town of Bansko, but, as before, the mixed force of locals and Bulgarian radicals was swiftly crushed. The *London Times* correspondent in Constantinople noted that the movement's few "agitators" in Constantinople declared that the Kresna rebels had formed a Provisional Government. However, the correspondent downplayed the movement: "Their account of the movement shows clearly that it is not serious, for they talk of creating an independent, or at least, autonomous Macedonia, without distinction of nationalities."¹² Regardless of its national orientation, armed resistance petered out in Macedonia in 1883.¹³ The changing borders and crushed uprisings sent successive waves of Slavic refugees from Macedonia into the Bulgarian Principality. There was a need to fill a national bureaucracy and a demand for teachers,¹⁴ so many educated young men from the Exarchate schools in Macedonia found employment in the principality. As a result, Macedonian towns like Veles, Prelip and Ohrid lost all their Bulgarian schoolteachers, creating an acute intellectual loss that would have to be replenished in the coming years.¹⁵ In addition, the migrants from Macedonia formed a powerful political lobby in Bulgaria. By the turn of the century, estimates of the Macedonian population in Sofia reached as high as 200,000, half of the capital's population.¹⁶ The Macedonians in Bulgaria created an often-volatile political climate much like the Palestinian presence in Beirut, Damascus and Amman after 1948.¹⁷

¹² *London Times*, "Turkey," March 2, 1882, p.5. The correspondent argues that autonomy is absurd due to Macedonia's containing five rival nationalities with irreconcilable political aspirations.

¹³ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death, The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 57.

¹⁴ *London Times*, "Turkey," February 27, 1880, p.5.

¹⁵ Anonymous, *The Near East. The Present Situation in Montenegro, Bosnia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Macedonia* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Co., 1907), 62.

¹⁶ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, 118.

¹⁷ Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts A Journey through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 64.

Without the means or the will for military action, the irredentist struggle was left in the hands of the priests and schoolteachers of the Exarchate.

Confident that it could deliver Eastern Rumelia and Macedonia, the Exarchate made ambitious proclamations. Exarch Antim I brought the 1879 Turnovo assembly to tears by reading from the book of Jeremiah 31, 16-17:

Thus saith the Lord; refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, said the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy
And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come home again into their own border.¹⁸

According to historian Douglas Dakin, the Exarch pledged: "We will make Macedonia a Bulgarian province by the schools and uniquely by the schools."¹⁹ However, after having enjoyed years of the Porte's favour (since the *firman* of 1870) the Exarchate faced an uphill struggle. Following defeat by Russia and the creation of the Bulgarian Principality, the Porte sought to offset the Exarchate's advantage by favouring the Greek Patriarchate and the Serbs. During the 1877-8 war, Exarchate bishops had been recalled to Constantinople and retained, resulting in the closure of several Exarchate churches and schools in Macedonia.²⁰ The Porte refused the Exarchate's requests for new priests to be sent to Macedonia,²¹ thereby allowing the Greeks to assert control over communities waiting for new priests and teachers. Additionally, it allowed the Serbs to establish more schools to further offset Bulgarian gains.²²

The Exarchate still strove to strengthen its weakened position as petitions for assistance came in from Macedonian communities. Exarch Joseph I visited Macedonia in early 1880 to try to "ameliorate the deplorable condition of the Bulgarians in Macedonia."²³ The Exarchate opened a Schools Department in 1880 to maintain schools in Macedonia and Thrace and to train teachers to work in these schools.²⁴ After 1883, the

¹⁸ *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments* (Toronto: Wm. Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1971), 696, as quoted in Richard J. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1918 A History*, 29-30.

¹⁹ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897—1913* (Thessaloniki: Museum of the Macedonian Struggle, 1993), 22. Dakin does not cite the source of this information, give an exact date or state which Exarch made this statement.

²⁰ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 64.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

²² Marin V. Pundeff, "Bulgarian Nationalism," 124.

²³ *London Times*, "Bulgarians in Macedonia," January 5, 1880, p.6.

²⁴ Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy* (London: Robert Hale, 1939), 16.

Exarchate went further in order to more effectively control the creation of schools, teacher hiring and scholarships.²⁵ It was able to found a secondary school in Thessaloniki in 1880, which soon flourished.²⁶ Successful Exarchate schools were also re-established in Bitola.²⁷ However, it was much tougher going in other regions. In the Serres district east of Thessaloniki, the Patriarchate and its schools had Hellenized the Slav population that had lived there before the war.²⁸ In Gevgelija, extra resources were required to reverse Uniate gains made in the Exarchate's absence, and wherever the Exarchate was permitted to set up schools, hefty fees had to be covered.²⁹

The Porte responded favourably to Greek cries of aggressive Pan-Slavism and turned a blind eye to Greek persecutions of "any teacher who dared to propagate the Bulgarian language."³⁰ The Exarchate priest of Kilkis took his entire flock over to the Catholic Uniates in a temporary defensive measure.³¹ A lengthy *London Times* report on the conditions in Macedonia in 1881 describes the coordinated effort which the Patriarchate and Porte put forth in opposing Bulgarian schools and teachers:

At present, when Panslavism seems a much more formidable enemy than Panhellenism, the Porte leans rather to the side of the Greeks, and not only assists the representatives of Phanar in their efforts to suppress the Slavonic liturgy and the Bulgarian schools, but occasionally arrests in rather indiscriminate fashion a number of Bulgarian schoolmasters and peasants who are suspected of treasonable designs. The trial of these suspected persons is always more or less summary and irregular, and generally ends with their being condemned to exile in Asia Minor.³²

Consequently, in spite of its efforts and expenditures, the Exarchate was losing ground in Macedonia in the early 1880s. In addition to Greek opposition and oppression by the Ottoman authorities, the deteriorating security situation in Macedonia further hampered the Exarchate. Bandits ravaged the countryside, and—as shown in this 1884

²⁵ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 73. Aarbakke describes efforts prior to 1883 as 'haphazard' by comparison.

²⁶ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death, The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 60 and 62.

²⁷ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 73.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 72-73. The Uniates or 'Papists' were under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. With the loss of Exarchate influence in Macedonia after 1878, several communities went over to the Catholic Uniates to avoid the influence of the Patriarchate. Because of this, as well as local political sentiment in places, the Uniate presence persisted in Macedonia after the establishment of the Exarchate in 1870.

³⁰ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, 114.

³¹ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 66.

report—even targeted students returning to the Bulgarian secondary school in Thessaloniki:

Some of the students of the Bulgarian Gymnasium at Salonica, who were returning to that institution after their summer's vacation were robbed upon the road and arrived at the gymnasium almost without a particle of clothing upon their backs. It is almost impossible for the Bulgarians to obtain instruction in their mother tongue, so many obstacles are placed in the way of their obtaining it. Books in Bulgarian and especially in the Russian language are eagerly seized by the Turks and mercilessly burnt. To-day I saw ten Bulgarians chained together and being led through this town (Soloon)[Thessaloniki] to prison because they had dared to ask the authorities to allow them to have a Bulgarian teacher for their village. In some instances, too, the Greeks incite the Turks against the Bulgarians, saying they show signs of a rebellious disposition, and the Turks pretend to believe the Greeks, because these latter assist the former in their plundering attacks upon the Bulgarians.³³

In October of 1887, the *London Times* reported that: "The state of Macedonia is worse now than it was at the time when the Powers at Berlin prescribed a remedy for it."³⁴ In 1888 the number of students in Exarchate schools still numbered less than half the number before the 1877-8 war.³⁵ The Exarchate needed political help from the Bulgarian Principality more than it needed money in order to end the oppression and open more schools.

The irredentist energies within the Bulgarian Principality had been focussed on Eastern Rumelia from the time of the Turnovo assembly. The assembly elected Alexander of Battenberg to be Bulgaria's first prince. It was an interesting choice considering Russia's influence in Bulgaria, but it helped to placate Western European fears. Against Russia's wishes, Bulgarian nationalists began to politically assert themselves in Ottoman controlled Eastern Rumelia, where there was a Bulgarian majority. Through strategic voting, the Bulgarians in the Rumelian Assembly took all the seats on the permanent council and created distinctly Bulgarian institutions modelled on the principality, including a Bulgarian school system.³⁶ With the local government under their control, Bulgarian agitators formed "Unity" committees disguised as charities or

³² *London Times*, "The Present Conditions of Macedonia," November 4, 1881, p.3.

³³ "Brigandage in Macedonia," *London Times*, November 28, 1884, p. 3.

³⁴ *London Times*, "The Balkan Peninsula," October 22, 1887, p.5.

³⁵ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 73.

³⁶ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 98-99.

gymnastic societies. These societies incorporated rifles into their exercise routines in preparation for an uprising that would bring about union with the Bulgarian Principality.³⁷

Bulgarian success in Eastern Rumelia was achieved via a successful local coup in September of 1885.³⁸ Fearful of Russian reaction, Prince Alexander and Prime Minister Petko Karavelov wavered in Sofia. House speaker Stephen Stambolov told the Prince that if he did not go to the Eastern Rumelian capital of Plovdiv and accept union with the principality, he would disgrace the Bulgarian people and should return to Germany.³⁹ As expected, Prince Alexander went to Plovdiv and took his army with him to defend against Ottoman attack. In the ensuing crisis, the Russian tsar withdrew all Russian military officers and advisors from Bulgaria. An opportunistic Serbia promptly invaded Bulgaria, forcing the Bulgarian army to rush west in order to save Sofia. To the surprise of all, the Bulgarian army, which had no experienced senior officers, decisively defeated the Serbs. When the Russians forced the abdication of Prince Alexander in 1886, Stephen Stambolov thereafter took charge of the country with a determination to steer Bulgaria on a more independent course. Stambolov and his party of "Russophobe nationalists" pursued British and Austrian support and put a new Germanic Prince, Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, on the Bulgarian throne in 1887.⁴⁰ Stambolov also obtained Ottoman support, a move that bolstered the Exarchate's education campaign in Macedonia.

Stambolov understood better than his contemporaries that education was the key to Macedonia. He knew that no Balkan country could win a sustained war against the Ottoman Empire without support from one of the Great Powers, which, for the time being, were not interested in the Balkans. Stambolov's plan to expand the number of Exarchate schools in Macedonia was ideally suited to the political circumstances as it gave the Bulgarians a legal and less visible avenue to propagate Bulgarian nationalism in

³⁷ Martin V. Pundeff, "Bulgarian Nationalism," 122.

³⁸ R.J. Crampton, *Bulgaria 1878-1918 A History*, 97-98. With Bulgarians controlling the elected assembly in Eastern Rumelia, the Bulgarian Secret Revolutionary Council took control of the local militia and, as planned, carried out a coup just after the harvest while the Bulgarian army was still conducting its autumn exercises. The Governor General of Eastern Rumelia, a Bulgarian, decided not to ask the Sultan to intervene. "I too am Bulgarian," he said, and allowed the conspirators to form a provisional government that demanded union with Bulgaria.

³⁹ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 100.

⁴⁰ Martin V. Pundeff, "Bulgarian Nationalism," 128. Stambolov went so far as to propose a union with the Ottomans to create a Turkish-Bulgarian empire with the sultan becoming tsar of Bulgaria.

Ottoman Macedonia. It was hoped that strengthening and extending the network of Exarchate schools in Macedonia would “create a Macedonian national consciousness such as would enable it to annex itself to Bulgaria eventually by force of its own nationality movement.”⁴¹ Through this policy of “peaceful penetration” Stambolov envisioned a repetition of the Eastern Rumelia union whereby a majority Bulgarian population would come to dominate a provincial government and, under the right circumstances, demand union with Bulgaria.⁴² He realized it would take a decade or two to teach the illiterate Slavic peasants of Macedonia that they were in fact Bulgarian nationals and that to do so required good relations with the Porte.⁴³ Stambolov relentlessly hunted down and executed bandits who worked the frontier with the Ottoman Empire. He suppressed radical Macedonian and Russophile elements within the principality, and cultivated a mutually beneficial relationship with the Porte in the late 1880s.⁴⁴ When Serbian leader Nicola Pasic came to Sofia with a plan for an alliance to divide Macedonia, Stambolov immediately rejected the offer and informed Athens and Constantinople of the plan.⁴⁵ Likewise, when Greek Prime Minister Tricoupis made an overture for a Balkan alliance to expel the Ottomans from Europe during visits to Belgrade and Sofia in 1891, Stambolov showed the least interest in the scheme and reported it to the Porte.⁴⁶ The *London Times*’ Sofia correspondent noted:

The Bulgarians are confident in the future of their race and are unwilling to barter away any portion of their heritage... They will do nothing against the interests of the suzerain Power, provided the latter performs its duties to its present Bulgarian subjects.⁴⁷

Stambolov’s policies were getting results. The Porte agreed to recognize Prince Ferdinand as the sovereign of Bulgaria in 1891⁴⁸ and connected Sofia to Thessaloniki by rail, giving the Bulgarians improved access to the Mediterranean and increasing

⁴¹ Anonymous [aka a Diplomatist] *Nationalism and War in the Near East*, ed Lord Courtenay of Penwith (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), 97.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Duncan M. Perry, *Stefan Stambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria 1870-1895* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 152-153.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 144.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 152.

⁴⁶ *London Times*, “Bulgaria,” August 7, 1891, p.3.

⁴⁷ *London Times*, “M. Tricoupis in the Balkan States,” January 30, 1891, p 13.

⁴⁸ *London Times*, “Bulgaria,” August 7, 1891, p.3.

communication between Macedonia and Bulgaria.⁴⁹ Most significantly, the Porte granted the Bulgarian Exarchate bishoprics for Skopje, Ohrid and Bitola in 1890 and for Veles and Nevrokop in 1894.⁵⁰ As reported in 1890, this mattered more in terms of education than religion:

But religion has really nothing to do with the matter. The appointment of Bulgarian Bishops in Macedonia involves tolerance of Bulgarian schools, and in the educational struggle between the Greek and the Bulgar the weaker race, whichever it may be, will have to go to the wall.⁵¹

The Porte instructed the Greeks not to obstruct those who wished to abandon the Patriarchate and control their own schools. This resulted in some 150 towns and villages opting to join the Exarchate in late 1890.⁵² The Greeks were squarely on the defensive and could only make token protests such as suggesting that the new Exarchate bishops should wear a different dress than those in the Patriarchate and be described as belonging to a “schismatic” Church.⁵³ The Exarchate also benefited from Catholic Uniate and Protestant schools that had preserved and promoted Slavic language instruction through the early 1880s.⁵⁴ While some towns and villages voluntarily went back to the Exarchate, it seems likely that the Bulgarians used their advantage to aggressively take students away from the Uniates, just as they had done in the mid 1870s. The Protestants remained a steady presence in the literature through the 1890s, but the Uniates were largely absent. Stambolov’s policies continued to reap substantial gains for the Bulgarians in Macedonia in the early 1890s. However, his methods were by no means universally popular, and vicious political intrigue remained the norm in the principality.

Stambolov’s nationalist policies enraged Pan-Slavist Russians, Bulgarians and Macedonians alike. Stambolov limited Russian language instruction in Bulgaria and forced most minority children to be educated in Bulgarian during the early 1890s.⁵⁵ The Greek communities of Eastern Rumelia were particularly annoyed since the Bulgarian-

⁴⁹ *London Times*, “Bulgaria and the Macedonian Railway System,” June 8, 1892, p.5.

⁵⁰ R.W. Seton-Watson, *The Rise of Nationality in the Balkans*, 130.

⁵¹ *London Times*, “The Balkan States,” July 21, 1890, p.5.

⁵² Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 69.

⁵³ *London Times*, “The Balkan States,” July 23, 1890, p.5.

⁵⁴ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 70.

⁵⁵ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 110.

only education policy did not apply to the Turkish minority.⁵⁶ Still, Stambolov's most bitter enemies were those who wished for a military solution to the Macedonian Question. Campaigns against bandits had primarily affected the Macedonians in Bulgaria, some of whom complained of being second class citizens in Stambolov's Bulgaria. Macedonian radicals accused Stambolov of sustained complicity against the Macedonian cause dating back to the uprisings of 1879-1882. For these Macedonians, Russian assistance was paramount for liberation, which furthered their resentment toward Stambolov. For his part, Stambolov pursued his enemies ruthlessly. In 1890, his police prevented the successful execution of a plot devised by the Macedonian-born officer Major Kosta Panitsa to assassinate Prince Ferdinand. Stambolov had Panitsa's fellow Macedonians execute the major.⁵⁷

Stambolov's loyalty and tutelage mattered little to the enterprising Prince Ferdinand. In time, the Austrian Prince learned much from his "Bulgarian Bismarck," and he deposed of Stambolov in 1894 when he felt confident enough to rule himself. Stambolov was placed under virtual house arrest and in July of 1895 was hacked to death in the streets of Sofia by Macedonian assassins. He blamed the attack on Ferdinand before succumbing to his death. While some Bulgarian historians such as Martin Pundeff are critical of Stambolov's "peaceful penetration" policy towards Macedonia,⁵⁸ Duncan Perry gives it credit for being the "hallmark" of Stambolov's prime ministry: "His approach was logical enough, but it was too slow for the taste of the hotheaded Macedonian revolutionaries."⁵⁹

The Exarchate school program in Macedonia survived into Ferdinand's reign in spite of a scare in March of 1894 when the Sultan, fearing that the educational balance in Macedonia was tipping too far in Bulgaria's favour, ordered the closure of Bulgarian schools.⁶⁰ The Exarch and the Bulgarian government appealed to the Great Powers and

⁵⁶ *London Times*, "The New Bulgarian Education Law," October 1, 1892, p.10. The Government's response was that it was 'impossible to "Bulgarize" the Turks.'

⁵⁷ Duncan M. Perry, *Stefan Stambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria 1870-1895*, 167. Panitsa's final cry was: "Long live Macedonia and Bulgaria."

⁵⁸ Martin V. Pundeff, "Bulgarian Nationalism," 130. Pundeff argues that Stambolov's "cautious" policy "led the revolutionary elements in Macedonia to pursue an independent course of action." This is a bit of an overstatement as the revolutionary organization in Macedonia owed its existence to Stambolov's policies.

⁵⁹ Duncan M. Perry, *Stefan Stambolov and the Emergence of Modern Bulgaria 1870-1895*, 239.

⁶⁰ Nadine Lange-Akund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 32.

threatened to provoke hatred against the Turks living within the Bulgarian Principality.⁶¹ The Sultan gave in almost immediately. Much to the displeasure of the Macedonian radicals, Ferdinand and his subservient ministers did not pursue military intervention. The prince did reconcile with Russia but continued to court Ottoman favour while reminding the world of how important it was to fully implement the Berlin Treaty. Ferdinand was made a field marshal of the Ottoman Army amidst considerable fanfare on a visit to Constantinople in 1896.⁶² The close relationship continued to be mutually beneficial, and Bulgarian neutrality in the 1897 Ottoman-Greek War allowed the Sultan's forces to rout the Greek army. Bishoprics were quietly granted to the Exarchate in Bitola, Strumitsa and Debar that same year on the condition that the announcement remained a secret until after the peace treaty with the Greeks had been ratified.⁶³ The senior Bulgarian diplomat in Constantinople admitted that the Bulgarians had chosen to follow Stambolov's strategy of peaceful penetration:

Our principal concern at present is with Macedonia. In our policy towards Turkey, I am a pupil of Stambolov, inasmuch as I am of the opinion that the interests of Bulgaria in the Balkans are almost identical with those of the Turks. They require that we should proceed in close agreement.⁶⁴

Thanks to Stambolov, the Bulgarians were able to make significant progress in advancing the number of Exarchate schools in Macedonia throughout the 1890s. Better relations with the Porte gave them the necessary legal agency to establish more schools. A smooth relationship between the Exarchate and the government in Sofia empowered the Bulgarians to work proactively at the expense of the Greeks.⁶⁵ Although statistics concerning Macedonia are notoriously unreliable, most sources show a marked increase in the number of Exarchist schools after 1887. According to Andrew Tosheff, the number of Bulgarian schools grew from 353 in 1886-87 to 1,196 in 1912.⁶⁶ Yet, this success required more than official favour. The Exarchate's administration of its schools

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁶² Stephen Constant, *Foxy Ferdinand Tsar of Bulgaria* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: Franklin Watts, 1980), 179.

⁶³ *London Times*, "The Bulgarian Bishoprics," January 7, 1898, p. 5; Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 30. The Bulgarians had demanded more bishoprics just before the war and threatened to mobilize if the demand was not met.

⁶⁴ *London Times*, "Macedonia," February 10, 1898, p.5.

⁶⁵ *London Times*, "The Situation in Macedonia," April 14, 1898, p.10.

improved after 1890, when Macedonia was divided into four school districts with superintendents and a council to oversee local school councils.⁶⁷ All Exarchate schoolteachers were hired and paid by the Exarchate and were supplied with manuals and a curriculum. The local and haphazard administration of previous decades was replaced by one which was uniform and hierarchical, allowing for an organized and rapid advance into the villages of Macedonia.

The Exarchate schools attracted thousands of students in Macedonia for several reasons. First, they drew Slavic speaking students away from Greek schools by offering the Slavs education in a language that was close, if not identical, to their own, and by establishing schools in villages where schools had not existed hitherto. Second, boarding schools in centres like Skopje, Kastoria, Bitola and Thessaloniki gave promising students a chance to leave their villages and continue their education, and some students could look forward to scholarships to study in Sofia.⁶⁸ Third, in the 1890s, Exarchate teachers were increasingly likely to be native Macedonians who had come up through the school system and received further education in Sofia and beyond.⁶⁹ Finally, another important “pull” factor for the Exarchate schools was that they were free, which encouraged many parents to forgo the prestige of a Greek education in order to save money. In rural areas, entire villages were enticed to switch allegiances. H.N. Brailsford observed this phenomenon on his first visit to Bitola:

I was talking to a wealthy peasant who came in from a neighbouring village to Monastir [Bitola] market. He spoke Greek well but hardly like a native. “Is your village Greek,” I asked him, “or Bulgarian?” “Well,” he replied, “it is Bulgarian now, but four years ago it was Greek.” The answer seemed to him entirely commonplace. “How,” I asked in some bewilderment, “did that miracle come about?” “Why,” said he, “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 a year and his bread, while the Greek consul paid him another £5; but we had no priest of our own... The Bulgarians heard of this and they came and made us an offer. They said they would give us a priest who would

⁶⁶ Andrew Tosheff, *The Bulgarian-Serbian Debate* (Sofia: The Royal Printing House, 1932), 67, cited in Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, 112.

⁶⁷ Nadine Lange-Akund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908*, 32.

⁶⁸ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913*, 21.

⁶⁹ Nadine Lange-Akund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908*, 32.

live in the village and a teacher to whom we need pay nothing. Well, sir, ours is a poor village, and so of course we became Bulgarians.”⁷⁰

Free education also gave an emergent generation the confidence to challenge traditional class structures, within which “Bulgar” was a synonym for peasant and “Greek” a synonym for merchant. Bulgarian education gave Slavs the will and means to challenge the status quo. They assumed positions which were once exclusively the domain of Greeks, such as businessmen and educators, and did so without learning Greek.⁷¹ Education also radicalized new generations as it gave thousands of children a taste of western European liberalism in surroundings that were seemingly backward and primitive by comparison. Brailsford received an insightful response when he asked the Ottoman Vali of Thessaloniki for an explanation of the troubles in Macedonia:

It is all the fault of the Bulgarian schools... In these nests of vice the sons of peasants are maintained for a number of years in idleness and luxury. Indeed, they actually sleep on beds. And then they go back to their villages. There are no beds in their father's cottages, and these young gentlemen are much too fine to sleep on the floor. They try the life for a little, and then they go off and join the revolutionary bands. What they want is a nice fat Government appointment.⁷²

Bulgarian education produced an alienated and idle generation as there were few employment possibilities for the nation's school graduates. The only job most could get which would not offend their sensibilities was a teaching post, where they could expound their ideals to the next generation of pupils and parents eager for education; this post would most likely be in a remote Macedonian village. The Exarchate's education campaign thereby created an “educational proletariat.”⁷³ Whether these teachers were sitting cafes in Sofia or teaching in the mountains of Macedonia, they were growing impatient with the status quo. The Exarchate schools thus produced the leadership of a Macedonian revolutionary movement that would challenge not only the authority of the Sultan, but also the authority of the Exarchate and the Bulgarian Principality.

⁷⁰ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia Its Races and Their Future*, 101-102. Brailsford comments: “The legend what Alexander the Great was a Greek goes out by one road, and the rival myth that Alexander was a Bulgarian comes in by the other.”

⁷¹ K.S. Brown, *The Past in Question*, 88. Brown cites the Greek writer, Nikolas Ballas, who described that in Krushevo after 1870 the Exarchist movement was producing children who were fanatical Bulgarians.

⁷² H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia Its Races and Their Future*, 42.

⁷³ R.W. Seton-Watson, *The Rise of Nationality in the Balkans*, 130.

The Greek Response

Macedonia was one of several “unredeemed” territories beyond the boundaries of the Greek state that Greek nationalists coveted for their *Megali Idea* (Great Idea) of a Greater Greece that would stretch across two continents and five seas. Macedonia was part of the ancient Hellenic civilization, the birthplace of Alexander the Great, and for centuries an integral part of the Byzantine Empire. The Greeks maintained that the population was ethnically Greek. Slav speakers were considered wayward “Slavophone” Greeks who had lost their Greek language skills over time through processes such as repeatedly using Slavic to give orders to their Slavic servants.⁷⁴ Given the territory’s Hellenic heritage and the religious and cultural dominance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate reigning in Macedonia through the Orthodox *millet*, the Greeks assumed Macedonia would just fall into their possession.⁷⁵ But it did not. The Patriarchate instead faced a sustained challenge to its authority in Macedonia that necessitated countermeasures; it met assertions by Slavic communities and the establishment of the Exarchate with propaganda and violence. The Greek educational cause in Macedonia benefited from the backing of the Porte after 1878, but the static and elite nature of Greek education allowed the Bulgarians and others to make gains at its expense through the 1890s. Lack of coordination between the Patriarchate and the Greek State, practical disadvantages, near bankruptcy in Athens, and an inability to retain teachers contributed to Greek difficulties until more practical and aggressive measures were taken at the turn of century.

The Bulgarian schools not only drew pupils away, but also constituted a threat to the authority of the Patriarchate and to a whole Greek-dominated way of life in Macedonia. As explained by historian Douglas Dakin:

Hellenism derived largely from the Patriarchal Church; from the flourishing Greek schools; and from a class which enjoyed in some measure an economic

⁷⁴ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, 200. The Greek Bishop of Bitola explained to Brailsford that Slavic servants, who had been acquired in great numbers as prisoners of war, lacked the mental capacity to learn Greek. As a result, the Greek masters were forced to learn the servant’s language to make things function: ‘Little by little they forgot their own language, and the “Bulgarophone Greek” of modern Macedonia is the result.’

⁷⁵ Evangelos Kofos, “Dilemmas and Orientations of Greek Policy in Macedonia: 1878-1886,” in *Macedonia Past and Present*, 135-136 (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1992).

superiority, a class which was conservative, which had everything to lose, and which had accommodated itself to Turkish rule...⁷⁶

The Greeks took full advantage of the Ottoman suppression of the Exarchate following the Treaty of Berlin, establishing educational dominance in the south and completely Hellenizing the majority of the Slavic villages in the Thessaloniki area.⁷⁷ The reigning Patriarch, Joakim III, was a former metropolitan of Thessaloniki who grasped the situation in Macedonia and ordered cooperation with the Ottoman authorities. Indeed, it was a “Greek Abbott” who betrayed an Exarchate plot for an uprising in Ohrid and Skopje in 1880.⁷⁸ The Greek government in Athens and its consuls in Macedonia were also fully aware that the Ottoman favour would only last as long as the Greeks were considered weaker than the Bulgarians.⁷⁹ Aided by numerous literary societies, the Greek government poured resources into Macedonia through its consuls for the construction of new schools and new colleges for teachers and for scholarships to the University of Athens.⁸⁰ Books espousing the glory of Ancient (Greek) Macedonia such as *The Prophecies of Alexander* were distributed free to schools.⁸¹ Yet, well before Stambolov turned the Ottomans away from the Greeks, inner rivalries and practical disadvantages hampered the Greek educational cause.

The traditions of the Greek Patriarchate simultaneously gave Greek education in Macedonia great strength and an exploitable weakness. Greek education offered upward mobility into the educated and commercial classes, making it attractive to ambitious Slav families. Greek was also extolled by the Patriarchate as the sacred language through which one communicated with God.⁸² Yet, because the Patriarchate was a component of the Ottoman theocracy, it resisted participating in a coordinated action with the secular, nationalist Greek State, especially in regard to education in Macedonia. Literary societies based in Constantinople rivalled those based in Athens. According to historian Evangelos Kofos, Greek government consuls and the Patriarchate’s bishops were “more frequently

⁷⁶ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913*, 117-118.

⁷⁷ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 72.

⁷⁸ Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy*, 73.

⁷⁹ Evangelos Kofos, “Dilemmas and Orientations of Greek Policy in Macedonia: 1878-1886,” 50.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 143. Kofos notes that girls’ education was to be made a priority.

⁸¹ Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, 96. These books included books printed in Slavic with Greek characters.

⁸² Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, 39. Other languages were seen as heretical.

than not, at loggerheads.”⁸³ Kofos cites consular papers from 1883 reporting on feuds over education in which the authors accuse the local priests of “insufficient national zeal...and for emphasizing ecumenicity rather than nationalism.”⁸⁴ The Porte exploited this after 1887 by pressuring the Patriarchate not to work with the consuls or the secular literary societies.⁸⁵ This division became increasingly problematic.

Hellenism in Macedonia struggled with an internal ideological division between the irredentist nationalism of the Greek state and the privileged theology of the Patriarchate. Due to its primary worldview, the Patriarchate misjudged the Exarchist challenge, seeing it as a revolt of schismatic peasants against its privileged, holy authority.⁸⁶ The Patriarchate believed that all the Christians of Macedonia were Greeks—its Greeks. Its prelates in Macedonia continued to be oblivious to the national appeal of the Bulgarian Church,⁸⁷ which offered free services and education in a language the Slavic peasants could identify with more closely with than Greek. The frustration in Athens with the Patriarchate prompted the Greek Government to threaten to review relations with the Patriarchate.⁸⁸ This lack of coordination and the inability to take proactive steps to meet the Bulgarian campaign caused the Greek cause to lose ground throughout the 1890s. A *London Times* reporter, who assessed the school competition in the Bitola region in 1898, noted that despite the fact that Greek schools outnumbered all their rival schools combined, the Bulgarians were making steady gains at the Greeks’ expense:

They [the Bulgarians] enjoy the advantage of simple organization, for the Exarchate alone directs the propaganda, while in the case of their rivals disputes between the Consulates and the spiritual authorities over the application of funds often exercise a paralysing effect. The Greeks in general have committed the error of assuming a combative and repressive attitude towards the other nationalities

⁸³ Evangelos Kofos, “Dilemmas and Orientations of Greek Policy in Macedonia: 1878-1886,” 143. The Greek State established its own autocephalous church in 1833.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, see footnote 24.

⁸⁵ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 81.

⁸⁶ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, 196.

⁸⁷ Evangelos Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, 22. The Patriarchate did not post its best men to Macedonia. Kofos states that Patriarchate prelates in Macedonia exhibited “an astonishing incompetence to grasp the changes occurring in their midst. Others tended to be concerned with safeguarding their own privileges, paying little attention to the national interests of their folk.”

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

instead of devoting all their attention to the organization and the development of their own movement.⁸⁹

Greek schools in Macedonia faced several practical disadvantages. While there was no apparent shortage of books and bibles, most books were in atticized Greek, which differed substantially from the local Greek dialect.⁹⁰ This made reading a challenge even for native Greek speakers and discouraged Slav speakers, who could find publications they could easily understand in the Exarchate schools. Curriculum content, where and when it was applied, also lessened the appeal of Greek schools. While the Bulgarians endeavoured to bring in more Western subjects and set up vocational schools in key central zone cities tailored to the local needs of students,⁹¹ the Greek schools stuck to Literature and Classicism. British folklorist G.F. Abbott found the teachers of a Greek school in Serres so passionately fond of the classics that they called one another “Bentley” and “Porson.”⁹² Brailsford made a similar observation:

...while the Bulgarian schools are modern institutions devoted to science, commerce and the modern languages, the Greek gymnasia favour a purely literary course. The main study is ancient Greek, and it is not an uncommon thing to meet a clerk or a country solicitor who can recite three or four plays, a speech or of Demosthenes and half the Odyssey.⁹³

This was impressive but impractical in a land populated largely by peasants looking for an inexpensive education for their children that would help them to prosper in a modernizing world. Graduates of Exarchate schools who opted to become teachers had their placement prospects limited to Macedonia and the Bulgarian Principality. New Greek teachers flushed with the spirit of the Hellenism would have likely found the prospect of working in Constantinople, Athens or Egypt more appealing and rewarding than working in a dusty Macedonian town where they had to struggle with students who might not understand them or appreciate their talents. The appeal of working in

⁸⁹ *London Times*, “The Situation in Macedonia,” April 14, 1898, p. 10.

⁹⁰ Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, 97.

⁹¹ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 77.

⁹² G.F. Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour in Macedonia*, 83 Richard Bentley and Richard Porson were esteemed eighteenth century classicists who held chairs at Cambridge University.

⁹³ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, 203.

Macedonia was also lessened by the fact that the Ottomans did not allow Greek teachers to receive pensions from the Greek government.⁹⁴

As critical as the Greek government was of the Patriarchate, Athens' own policies proved detrimental to Greek education in Macedonia. Kofos blames the Greek government for failing "to finance a major program of national education and indoctrination" in Macedonia in order to compensate for the Patriarchate's shortcomings. Furthermore, Athens' foreign policy in the 1880s and 1890s put the Greeks at a disadvantage by angering the Ottomans. Boundary revisions to the Treaty of Berlin gave Greece Thessaly—immediately to the south of Macedonia—in 1881, but only after Greece threatened to mobilize.⁹⁵ Greek mobilization in 1886 over Epirus, followed by the growth of irredentist aspirations toward Crete, turned Athens' attention south and angered the Porte, in turn giving the Bulgarians a diplomatic opening to use to their advantage. Greek Prime Minister Kharilaos Trikoupis approached Bulgaria in a failed bid to build a Balkan alliance. Nonetheless, Macedonia was not Trikoupis' principal concern. While he believed in the *Megali Idea*, Trikoupis put the modernization of the Greek Kingdom ahead of irredentist goals.⁹⁶ Under Trikoupis, Greece undertook a number of modernization initiatives such as constructing railroads, building the Cornith canal, and expanding and modernizing the state school system. These were vital and significant projects, but they left Greece near bankruptcy in 1893 when Exarchist schools were mushrooming throughout Macedonia.⁹⁷

Empty state coffers and the lack of a government policy to realize the *Megali Idea* prompted the creation of *Ethniki Hetairia* (National Society) in 1894. *Ethniki Hetairia's* immediate aim was to direct efforts towards countering Bulgarian advances in the north. This society consisted of Greeks from the middle and upper middle classes who understood the importance of the educational struggle in Macedonia.⁹⁸ *Ethniki Hetairia*

⁹⁴ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 80.

⁹⁵ C.M. Woodhouse, *Modern Greece A Short History* (London & Boston: Faber and Faber, 1968), 181.

⁹⁶ Keith R. Legg and John M. Roberts, *Modern Greece, A Civilization on the Periphery* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 31. Through the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Trikoupis alternated as Prime Minister with his rival, Theodoros Deliyannis, who put irredentism ahead of modernization.

⁹⁷ Richard Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece*, 69. Greece's poor economy prompted some 350,000 Greeks, mostly young men, to emigrate between 1890 and 1914.

⁹⁸ Jerry Augustions, "The Dynamics of Modern Greek Nationalism: The 'Great Idea' and the Macedonian Problem," *East European Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1973): 449. Many of *Ethniki Hetairia's* members had family ties to Macedonia.

worked quickly to lobby the Greek government to fund schools in Macedonia. According to L.S. Stavrianos, the Greeks were soon spending “more money in proportion to population on schools in the so-called unredeemed territory than they did in Greece proper.”⁹⁹ What is more, teaching in Macedonia became an act of patriotism in Greece. Lucy Garnett noted that many of the woman teachers in rural Greek schools in Macedonia were from Athens.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, the Greeks continued to lose ground and faced a severe setback in 1897 when Ottoman troops decisively defeated Greek forces in Thessaly. Only Great Power intervention prevented the Ottomans from marching into Athens. Subsequently, *Ethniki Hetairia* was officially disbanded.

The defeat of 1897 did provoke more Greek interest in Macedonia. Author and patriot Ion Dragoumis wrote that because of it, Macedonia could serve a cathartic purpose for the Greek national cause.¹⁰¹ Appointed as consular secretary to the Greek consul in Bitola in 1902, Dragoumis was one of a new generation of Greeks committed to pursuing the Greek cause in Macedonia more energetically. The Patriarchate, too, began to appoint more competent and nationalistic metropolitans to Macedonia under the direction of Patriarch Constantine V. The most notable of these was Germanos Karavangelis, who was appointed to Kastoria in 1900. A strong nationalist, Karavangelis had earned a doctorate of philosophy in Germany and gained notoriety for reforming and investing in the schools as Bishop of Pera. He found Kastoria full of the Patriarchate’s priests and schoolteachers—they had fled the surrounding towns and villages to escape violence and intimidation from those working through the Exarchate. The new metropolitan therefore established an intelligence network and organized armed bands to re-establish the Greek presence in the countryside.¹⁰²

The Greeks had someone who could employ their opponent’s tactics of benevolence and ruthlessness in the new metropolitan of Kastoria. A program to provide free food to students soon increased the popularity of Greek schools in the area.¹⁰³ After the unsuccessful Ilinden Uprising in 1903, Karavangelis enlisted Ottoman support to

⁹⁹ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 521.

¹⁰⁰ Lucy Garnett, *Turkish Life in Town and Country* (New York: G.P. Putman’s Sons, 1905), 243. In Garnett’s words, for their deeds, the teachers were “...idolized by the scholars and their mothers.”

¹⁰¹ Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, 90-91.

¹⁰² Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913*, 119-120.

¹⁰³ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 80.

forcibly convert entire villages to the Patriarchate. He also took the opportunity to destroy the Exarchate school system in his jurisdiction.¹⁰⁴ By 1904, a new Greek Macedonian Committee had been formed from the membership lists of *Ethniki Hetairia*, supporting not only Greek schools but also Greek guerrilla bands that were pouring into Macedonia. These bands were comprised of brigands, border guards, and young officers headed by Dragoumis' brother-in-law, Pavlos Melas.¹⁰⁵ Killed in a skirmish with Ottoman troops in October of 1904, Melas became a hero and martyr of the Greek cause in Macedonia. Practical strategies helped stabilize the Greek schools in Macedonia until the cavalry, quite literary, arrived. The Greeks had also weakened the Exarchist cause by granting permission for more Serb schools that, unlike the Greek schools, could appeal to the Slavs of Macedonia on the basis of language and custom.

Serbian School Ventures

Macedonia had not been at the centre of the autonomous Serbian principality's irredentist agenda, but Serbs still coveted Macedonia as part of "Greater Serbia." Skopje had been the capital of the medieval Serbian kingdom of King Dushan in the fourteenth century. Macedonia was also adjacent to the hallowed territory of "Old Serbia" (Kosovo), home of the Serbian Patriarchate until 1766. Ethnographic maps of Serbian territory, such as the "Serbian High School Map of 1891," stretched Serb claims south almost as far as the Aegean.¹⁰⁶ Yet, Serbian educational efforts were fairly piecemeal prior to 1878, and did not get sufficient support and attention from Belgrade until Bulgaria defeated Serbia in 1885. As latecomers to the education race, the Serbs cooperated with the Greeks and made cultural, linguistic and financial appeals to attract students from Bulgarian schools. New, aggressively promoted Serb schools prompted the creation of Exarchist societies and organizations devoted to checking Serb efforts. Utilized by the Greeks and despised

¹⁰⁴ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913*, 135, see footnote 51.

¹⁰⁵ John S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause Brigands and Irredentism in Modern Greece 1821-1912* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 224-225. To Melas and the other Greek officers, brigands were an ill-disciplined but indispensable force. Melas had the Greek guerrilla forces wear local brigand dress to impress the population and gain the trust of the local brigands in the ranks.

¹⁰⁶ H.R. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics A Review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1951), 51.

by the Bulgarians, Serb schools were mainly limited to larger population centres in the north and west of Macedonia, where they usually placed third in popularity.

The Serbian literary awakening, led by Vuk Karadzic, had sparked interest in parts of Macedonia as early as 1813. A small Serbian educational movement evolved alongside the Bulgarian challenge through the mid nineteenth century. As mentioned, Serbian teachers were found at work in Veles, Ohrid and Prelip in the early 1860s. The Serbian Principality began to take more interest in Macedonia and established a cultural committee in Belgrade in 1868, “whose chief aim was the opening of Serbian schools in Old Serbia and Macedonia.”¹⁰⁷ According to Serbian historian Michael Boro Petrovich, the Serbs had established over sixty school schools across the north and west of Macedonia by 1871, including a teacher training school at Prizren in Kosovo.¹⁰⁸ Serbia’s 1876 war with the Ottoman Empire prompted the closure of all Serb schools in Macedonia, but Serb schools regained favour soon after 1878. Belgrade began to take more interest in Macedonia after Serbia gained full independence in 1878. The Austrian occupation of Bosnia-Hertzevovina cut off the westward designs of Serb irredentism, compelling nationalists to look south.¹⁰⁹ Military defeat in 1885 brought more urgency to the Serb cause in Macedonia. Ostensibly on private initiative, the Society of St. Sava formed in Belgrade in 1886 with an edict to spread Serbian nationalism in Old Serbia and Macedonia through education. Within three years, the society had opened forty-two schools in the “unredeemed” lands to the south.¹¹⁰

What success the Serbs enjoyed in Macedonia should be credited to the work of historian and politician Stojan Novakovic. Novakovic was appointed as Serbia’s envoy in Constantinople and procured permission to have Serbian consulates established in Skopje, Thessaloniki, Bitola and Pristina in the late 1880s.¹¹¹ Additionally, he was responsible for creating a rail connection between Skopje and Thessaloniki and

¹⁰⁷ Micheal Boro Petrovich, *A History of Modern Serbia 1804-1918* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 495.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Tim Judah, *The Serbs History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, 67. Austrian diplomats purposely tried to direct irredentist Serb nationalism toward Macedonia. In 1881 the Austrians and Serbs signed a secret agreement in which Austria supported Serbia’s expansion into Ottoman territory on condition that Serbia would suppress intrigues against Austrian territory, specifically Bosnia.

¹¹⁰ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 88.

¹¹¹ Wayne S. Vucinich, “Serbian Foreign Policy, 1903—1908” (doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1941), 94.

improving trade links between Serbia and the Ottoman Empire. Novakovic's most important contribution was his recognizing that language, literacy and education were the foundation and strength of the Bulgarian movement in Macedonia. He realized that Serbia had to build its own schools and develop educational strategies to extend its influence in Macedonia. As early as 1866, Novakovic grasped that Serbia's linguistic connections to Macedonia were weaker than Bulgaria's.¹¹² In a search for closer connections, young Serb scholars studied Macedonian dialects, looking for similarities to the Serbian language in order to strengthen Serb claims.¹¹³ Novakovic admitted that Serbia's adoption of the "Ekavian" dialect as the standard Serbian language after 1878 aimed in part to strengthen Serbia's claim to Macedonia.¹¹⁴ Novakovic also gave Serb backing to Slavs in Macedonia who were pursuing a distinct Macedonian national and linguistic identity in a further effort to undermine the Bulgarians.¹¹⁵ From 1886 to 1898, Serb teachers in Macedonia instructed in a mixture of Serbian and local Macedonian, using customized textbooks published by Serbian interests in Constantinople.¹¹⁶

Serbian efforts intensified further after 1888 with the Belgrade government taking a more direct role in establishing schools in Macedonia. The Ministry of Education had opened a special department for schools and churches outside of Serbia in 1887 which was transferred, along with the interests of the Society of St. Sava, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹¹⁷ Working through the Serbian consuls in Macedonia, the ministry's propaganda department sought to open Serbian boys and girls schools wherever possible. They enjoyed some success in recruiting students from the Exarchist schools with scholarships to study in Belgrade from the St. Sava Society.¹¹⁸ The Serbs also received some diplomatic and material support from Russia to aid their education efforts.

Journalist Fredrick Moore observed that students of a Serb school in Skopje had "adopted

¹¹² Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 63.

¹¹³ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Intercourse and Education. *Report of the International Commission to Inquire in to the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, (Washington: The Endowment, 1914), 27.

¹¹⁴ Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 63. The 'Ekavian' dialect was closer to Bulgarian than other Serb dialects and became standardized Serbian after independence in 1878.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict, Greece, Bulgaria and the Macedonian Question* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 92. 'Pro-Macedonian' activists and Serbian authorities came to an agreement on this in 1886.

¹¹⁷ Nadine Lange-Akund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908*, 58-59.

a distinctive uniform after the manner of Russians in Finland” at Russia’s suggestion.¹¹⁹ According to historian Wayne Vucinich, the number of Serb schools in Macedonia grew to 300 by 1902.¹²⁰

The Serbs employed a number of the Exarchate’s methods to attract students to their schools. Free books were given to poor pupils and scholarships to Belgrade were awarded to promising students. Towards the turn of the century, the Serbs were increasingly resorting to financial incentive. The 1898 *London Times* report from Bitola recounts a “sudden advance” made by Serbian schools in the area in the preceding two years. The Serbs’ rivals maintained that this advance was “due to the unlimited employment of funds for the purpose of bribing the Bulgarian peasants to send their children to the Serbian schools.”¹²¹ However, student enrolment continued to be a problem for the Serbs. In the Skopje area, the Serbs set up schools in neighbourhoods where only one household asked for a school.¹²² Consequently, some Serbian schools had more teachers than students.¹²³ This prompted creative management— in December of 1899, a group of Serbian teachers established a school in Veles and “imported” twelve students from Skopje to bolster the school register. This move provoked such violent reactions from the Exarchate’s local followers that the Porte had to dispatch four battalions of troops to keep the peace in Veles.¹²⁴

The Bulgarian Exarchate and its followers took steps to check the Serbian advance. In 1897, the Brotherhood of Mercy was formed in Thessaloniki to prevent Slavic children from attending Serb schools. The organization also enticed Serbian teachers to work at Bulgarian schools, a move which apparently succeeded.¹²⁵ Future revolutionary leader Gyorche Petrov convinced two villages in the Bitola area to abandon Serbian patronage and accept that of the Exarchate, and then celebrated with the new

¹¹⁸ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 88.

¹¹⁹ Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail*, 188.

¹²⁰ Wayne S. Vucinich, “Serbian Foreign Policy, 1903—1908,” 96.

¹²¹ *London Times*, “The Situation in Macedonia,” April 14, 1898, p. 10.

¹²² Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 92.

¹²³ Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, 183, footnote 6.

¹²⁴ *London Times*, “Macedonia,” December 8, 1899, p. 15.

¹²⁵ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movement, 1893-1903* (North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1982), 89-90.

adherents by burning all their Serbian books.¹²⁶ In some places there were violent incidents enacted against Serbian schools and teachers. In Kilkis, a Serb teacher established a school in a rented house and recruited children from a few poor families with offers of candy and money. Consequently, a mob of local Bulgarians beat the Serb teacher, damaged the building, and ordered the proprietor to cease renting his house to the Serbs under the threat that it would be burnt down.¹²⁷ Some “pro-Serbs” who set up Schools in the Bitola and Thessaloniki areas were murdered.¹²⁸

Although the Serbs had established several schools and had sufficient financial resources, they had difficulty making educational gains in Macedonia for a number of reasons. First, the Serbs started late, only making a concerted effort in the late 1880s, long after hundreds of Bulgarian and Greek schools had been established in the territory. Second, the Serbs tried to appeal to ethno-linguistic similarities and to use financial incentives, both of which had already been used successfully by the Exarchate. The Exarchate’s hold on the Slavs under its influence was maintained by Bulgarian countermeasures against Serb encroachments. Critically, the Serbs were not recognized as a nationality in the Ottoman Empire and therefore needed the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s approval to establish schools. Shifting education into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the banner of propaganda indicates that the Serbs understood the political nature of education in the contest for Macedonia. But without the administrative means of their own *millet*, they could not hope to equal the flourishing schools of the Exarchate. The Greeks did grant permission for Serb schools, but usually in order to meet Greek needs since Serb schools could offer Slavs education in a Slavic language while allowing them to remain loyal to the Patriarchate. However, Belgrade and Athens failed to agree on a coordinated education strategy in Macedonia in 1891 due to conflicting territorial claims.¹²⁹ Serbs and Greeks came into direct conflict in the Greek-dominated

¹²⁶ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 150. The two villages had been under the Patriarchate before becoming Serb.

¹²⁷ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 90.

¹²⁸ Michael Boro Petrovic, *A History of Modern Serbia 1804-1918, Volume II*, 501.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 497. The Greeks also feared that a coordinated strategy would push the Bulgarians and the Porte closer together. Even when the Serbs did gain favour with the Porte in the late 1890s, they were still hampered by the lack of their own *millet*.

regions of Thessaloniki and the Halkidiki peninsula, although to a relatively minor extent.¹³⁰

After 1898, the Serbs faced further difficulties and came into more frequent conflict with all the competing nations and organizations.¹³¹ Belgrade discontinued its use of local Macedonian dialects in school instruction, opting for standardized Serbian and thereby pushing Macedonian autonomists to either pursue an independent course or ally with the Bulgarians. Although the Serbs increasingly relied on financial incentives to gain new students, this strategy had its limits and the Serbs lost ground around the turn of the century. Serb schools lacked the classical, elite prestige of the Greek schools and had trouble matching the ethno-linguistic appeal the Bulgarians. The dialects that the Slavs of Macedonia spoke were much closer to Bulgarian than Serbian. This may be another reason why many of those who had left Bulgarian schools to attend Serb schools returned to the Exarchist institutions. Keith Brown cites British Foreign Office correspondence from 1898 in which the author doubted that even children enrolled in Serb schools would “forget that they are really Bulgarians.”¹³² While the Serbs boasted they had some 300 schools in 1902, it should be noted that these numbers included Macedonia and Kosovo. In Kosovo, the Exarchate had few interests and the Greeks and Vlachs had almost none. Furthermore, where Serb schools existed, they were not always well-attended. In Skopje, the Exarchate had successfully appealed to have Serb schools closed since the Serb schools did not have enough students for the minimum level of support.¹³³ Finally, the Serbs suffered from not having many secondary schools. As a result, many of their best students went on to attend Exarchate schools. A Serbian schoolmaster related this dilemma to Edith Durham when she visited Ohrid:

‘I teach the children to be Servian [Serbian] patriots,’ said the active little Servian schoolmaster to me; ‘their parents are Serb, and they wish their children also to be Serb, but unluckily this is only an elementary school. Those who cannot afford to

¹³⁰ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 89. These conflicts never reached the intensity of the conflicts with the Bulgarians. Occasionally, the Porte granted permits directly to the Serbs for schools, but usually this was only done in consultation with the Patriarchate.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 93. In Skopje, the high profile issue of the nationality of the city’s future metropolitan split the Patriarchate’s followers into Serbian, Greek and Vlach factions.

¹³² Heathcote to Blunt, Salonica, 8 April 1898: FO 195/2029/305, quoted in Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, 61.

¹³³ Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 64.

go elsewhere to finish their education must finish in the Bulgarian school, and there they will be taught they are Bulgars. It is very sad.’¹³⁴

Like the Greeks, the Serbs took advantage of the aftermath of the failed 1903 uprising to form armed bands to forcibly agitate for Serbia in Macedonia. The Porte did its part by recognizing the Serbs as a nationality in the Ottoman Empire.

Romanian Schools, Vlach Students

In H.N. Brailsford’s words: “There is no race in all the Balkans so mysterious and so individual as the Vlachs.”¹³⁵ Known for being thrifty pastoralists, the Vlach people resided primarily in the mountain villages of the southern Balkans. As “Greek” and “Bulgar” were used to denote merchant and peasant, “*Blachos*” was the Greek term for shepherd.¹³⁶ Speaking a Latin language akin to Romanian, the Vlachs prospered not only as herdsmen but also as merchants, which allowed them to gain knowledge of Greek. Prosperous Vlachs were among the most loyal adherents to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Indeed, the Greeks considered the Vlachs to be Greeks and counted on their loyalty, especially since the Vlachs made up substantial segments of the population in mountain villages of and towns of southwestern Macedonian and some key commercial towns, notably Bitola.¹³⁷ Brailsford commented that, “The so-called ‘Greeks’ of Monastir [Bitola] are Vlachs to a man.”¹³⁸

Using the similarity of the Vlach language as the basis of their claim, Romania began to lobby for Romanian consuls and schools for its Vlach brethren in Macedonia after 1878. Although the ethno-linguistic connections between Romania and the Vlachs were weak at best, creating schools for the Vlachs gave Romania an opportunity to join the education race and gain a stake in Macedonia’s fluid political situation. Separated by

¹³⁴ M. Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans* (London, Edinburgh, Dublin and New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1905), 176.

¹³⁵ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, 175-6.

¹³⁶ T.J. Winnifrith, *The Vlachs: The History of a Balkan People* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Company Limited, 1987), 1.

¹³⁷ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, 40.

the breadth of Bulgaria, the Romanians could not expect to absorb the Vlachs territorially. "Rather they made use of the Vlachs as a sort of speculative investment which perhaps could be used profitably for bargaining purposes some time in the future."¹³⁹ Romania's effort in Macedonia met with some success, but well-funded local Vlach teachers returning from Bucharest were despised by the Patriarchate and loyal Patriarchist Vlachs, prompting emergent Vlach nationalists to ally with the Exarchate.

The first Romanian school opened near Bitola in 1864, with more being established in the area in early 1880s.¹⁴⁰ These were villages loyal to the Patriarchate which had already established Greek schools.¹⁴¹ The Patriarchate tried to suppress the schools but the Porte overrode them and granted permits. This was a calculated move designed to punish the Greek cause during the conflict over Thessaly without yielding ground to the Bulgarians. The Romanians took advantage of the opening by sending in teachers, establishing a high school in Bitola, and giving scholarships to Vlachs to study in Bucharest.¹⁴² These actions antagonized the Patriarchate. Keith Brown describes the shock the Greek hierarchy experienced in Krushevo in 1891 when Sterju Conescu, a local young man who had been educated in Bucharest, "returned to Krushevo loaded with threatening ideas and resources."¹⁴³ However, the Romanians were not deterred. The number of Romanian schools rose to 35 by 1890, and it soon became possible to employ local teachers.

Most of the Romanian agitation in Macedonia started with the work of one man: Apostol Margarit. Like many of the early Slav teachers, Margarit began his career as a teacher in Greek schools. He became inspector general of Romanian schools in the Ottoman Empire in 1879 and presided over the many new school openings in the 1880s.

¹³⁸ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, 176. Brailsford observed that the Vlachs spoke Greek in public and Vlach only at home. He accounts for the survival of the Vlach 'race' over the centuries to the strength of the Vlach household and Vlach children being taught to "despise new races." There is likely some truth to this in terms of martial patterns, but, like others, Vlach survival had much to do with the systemic tolerance and apathy of the Ottomans.

¹³⁹ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 521. The likely scenario would be Romanian trading its interests in Macedonia with Bulgaria in exchange for territory on the Black Sea coast. The Romanians also lobbied for an autocephalous church in the Ottoman Empire like the Bulgarian Exarchate.

¹⁴⁰ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 83.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁴³ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, 89. For the Krushevo's Patriarchists, it was no longer a simple case of trying to run foreign propagandists out of town.

Margarit did this at the direct expense of the Greek schools. A *Times* newspaper article from 1888 reported that “a certain Margariti” denounced fifteen Greek revolutionaries to the authorities and “spent a great deal of money in endeavouring to create a race antagonism between the Greeks and the sparse population of Roumanian descent...” in the Bitola and Thessaloniki areas.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, Margarit inspired a generation that assumed an increasingly aggressive stance toward the Patriarchate’s authority. Brailsford quotes a report of a 1904 incident in Bitola wherein Margarit’s “notorious” son-in-law, Pinetta, lobbied for a deceased adherent of the Patriarchate to be buried by an unrecognized Romanian priest on account of the deceased’s brother being a convert to the Romanian cause. The Greek community reacted with such violence against the “pro-Romanians” that the authorities could not control the situation.¹⁴⁵ This incident indicates that Margarit’s work in the 1880s produced a radicalized cabal of Vlach/Romanian nationalists. It also shows the bitterness of the Greek resistance.

The Greeks considered the Vlachs to be Greeks and reacted strongly against Vlach schools. Urban, commercially minded Vlachs had long pursued Greek education, called themselves Greeks, and generously supported Greek schools.¹⁴⁶ In contrast, Romanian schools had more appeal for poor Vlachs. Armed Greek bands took action against Romanian teachers as early as 1880.¹⁴⁷ According to the *London Times*, the Greeks feared the Romanian agitation was designed to bring about Austrian intervention: “The more nationalities which can be reckoned in Macedonia the stronger will be the plea for a military occupation of the province by a great foreign power if it should pass out of Turkish hands.”¹⁴⁸ The Patriarchate’s prelates had long preached that Greek was the language of God and Vlach the language of the devil,¹⁴⁹ which further explains the Vlach shyness about speaking their language in public. In their fieldwork on the lives and

¹⁴⁴ *London Times*, “Macedonia,” March 28, 1888, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, 190. The authorities telegraphed the Sultan for instructions and were told to bury the corpse themselves.

¹⁴⁶ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 82.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 84. The Patriarchate counted on several exclusively Vlach towns to remain loyal and help in their campaigns against the Bulgarian Exarchate.

¹⁴⁸ *London Times*, “Macedonia,” March 28, 1888, p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ Alan J.B. Wace and M.S. Thompson, *The Nomads of the Balkans. An Account of Life and Customs Among the Vlachs of Northern Pindus* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1914), 194.

customs of the Vlachs, ethnographers Alan Wace and M.S. Thompson reported overhearing Vlach schoolchildren being ordered to speak Greek in their presence.¹⁵⁰

To the Greeks, the Romanian movement had no real legitimacy. They considered it to be “an aggression of money-grubbing individuals”¹⁵¹ bankrolled by Bucharest. There is some truth to this accusation. The *London Times* 1898 report on schools in Bitola points to the “considerable funds obtained from the Ministry of Instruction at Bucharest” that aided the Vlach cause.¹⁵² By the turn of the century, Bucharest was contributing “600,000 francs annually for the propaganda—a sum which will buy many adherents.”¹⁵³ But were the Romanians gaining converts? Brailsford noted that for years Greek opposition had limited the growth of Vlach schools to the point that many “had more teachers than pupils and every pupil had to be paid to learn.”¹⁵⁴ However, by the turn of the century, all the money was helping the Romanian campaign make inroads in poorer Vlach villages. Brailsford expressed surprise in seeing a Vlach secondary school under construction in the “straggling” and “minute” village of Pisoderi, between Florina and Kastoria. The Vlachs “were very anxious to explain to me that this school of theirs is to be a modern and commercial school.”¹⁵⁵

Romanian efforts to establish schools and build nationalism resulted in some local successes, but the Romanians lacked a grand strategy and were not able to dominate a region.¹⁵⁶ Unlike other countries, Romania did not border Macedonia and had no medieval or ancient Vlach kingdom to serve as a historical antecedent upon which to build modern nationalism. Vlachs who broke away from the Patriarchate had to rely on Exarchist protection in times of violence. For this reason, some Vlachs in the Krushevo area joined the Slav-led 1903 Ilinden Uprising. Nevertheless, this could not be said to constitute a “mass movement” as many Vlachs in the region remained staunchly loyal to

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁵¹ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, 89.

¹⁵² *London Times*, “The Situation in Macedonia,” April 14, 1898, p. 10.

¹⁵³ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, 188.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 175. By saying ‘modern and commercial’ the Vlachs were emphasizing that their school did not have the classical qualities and curriculum of a Greek school.

¹⁵⁶ The Vlachs were strongest in the Bitola region, which was amongst the most fiercely contested regions of Macedonia.

the Patriarchate.¹⁵⁷ Vlach schools that succeeded did so due to the energies of local teachers. Apostol Margarit worked extensively in the Bitola area, stocking the Romanian secondary school in Bitola with students from the few villages where he had a following.¹⁵⁸ Wace and Thompson attribute the success of the Vlach school and national movement in the village of Turia to the energy and efficiency of a local organizer who enlisted the support of local bandits and suppressed the local Greek schools.¹⁵⁹

Overall, the education race represented an opportunity for the Romanian government but an inconvenience for the Vlachs of Macedonia. The Vlachs had existed and prospered as a small, scattered and thoroughly invisible minority. Education and nationalism forced them to proclaim loyalties and pay the price for doing so. New frontiers became inconveniences for Vlach merchants to cross, Vlach shepherds found their summer and winter pastures in different countries. The Vlachs of Macedonia struggled and survived as best they could. Like other communities during the armed struggle of 1903—1908, various Vlach communities respectively backed each side depending on local circumstances.¹⁶⁰ The Romanians continued to fund schools and consuls. In 1905 they succeeded in diplomatically obtaining an autocephalous Romanian Church and *millet* in the Empire after Ottoman authorities in Ioannina “did violence to the sanctity of the Romanian Consulate and to the persons of some Romanian school inspectors.”¹⁶¹

The Rest of the Pack: Albanians, Muslims, Jews and Protestants

Populating much of northern and western Macedonia, the Albanians were, for the most part, left out of the educational competition for Macedonia due to the combined oppression of the Porte and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. The Albanians claimed descent from the ancient Illyrians of the western Balkans. They had long lived with other Balkan

¹⁵⁷ See Keith Brown’s *A Past in Question* on the competing loyalties in Krushevo and varying interpretations of the events of 1903. Fredrick Moore noted on his visit to Krushevo following the Ottoman reprisals that the town’s Vlachs had suffered more than local Slavs.

¹⁵⁸ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 85. According to Aarbakke, Margarit lacked any mass following. Teachers were often his friends and students members of his extended family.

¹⁵⁹ Alan J.B. Wace and M.S. Thompson, *The Nomads of the Balkans*, 181. According to the authors, in most places, the opposite was the case.

¹⁶⁰ T.J. Winnifrith, *The Vlachs: The History of a Balkan People*, 143.

¹⁶¹ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia, Its Races and Their Future*, 189.

populations in mixed communities in Kosovo, Macedonia and Epirus, and they had a longstanding connection to Macedonia by virtue of Alexander the Great's Illyrian mother, Olympias. Albanians could also look back at the medieval hero, Skanderbeg, who had resisted the Ottoman invasion in the fifteenth century. However, many Albanians, particularly those in Kosovo and Macedonia, had converted to Islam over the centuries and were amongst the Sultan's most loyal subjects; Albanians even served as the Sultan's bodyguards. While the Sultan was happy to grant permits for various schools that would keep his European Christians divided and quarrelling amongst one another, Albanian schools had long been banned. During his travels in Kosovo in 1903, journalist Frederick Moore deduced that the Porte wished to keep the Albanians as wild as possible so that the highlanders would provide a "lawless barrier against the West."¹⁶² But as wild as the Albanians may have been, they were not immune to the forces of change that travelled via the exchange of goods and ideas.

Foreign scholars had taken an interest in researching the Albanian language and history during the early nineteenth century. Influenced by this work, Italo-Albanian intellectuals in Italy began publishing works on Albanian history as well as new works of nostalgic poetry about Skanderbeg and the pre-Ottoman Past. The poet Girolamo De Rada mused: "Divided and with forces dispersed / is the Albanian race / on people's earth. / Without flag! Without books! / And yet it has a noble language. It is alone, and adverse fate whips it..."¹⁶³ Yet, these appeals created little excitement amongst the Albanians of Ottoman Europe who were content with their privileged status in the Empire.¹⁶⁴ The few Albanians who pursued education did so in Greek schools or Turkish government language schools. The Jesuits and Franciscans established Albanian language schools and printing presses in northern Albania, with Great Power support. However, the schools generated little interest amongst the members of the predominantly Muslim

¹⁶² Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail*, 226.

¹⁶³ G. De Rada, *Uno specchio d'umano transito* (the title given *Serafina Thopia* in its later edition), (Naples, 1897), 37, as quoted by G. Schiro Jr., "Della lingua albanese e della sua letteratura anche in rapporto alle colonie albanesi d'Italia," *Studi Albanesi* (Rome, II 1932), 134, quoted in Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 116.

¹⁶⁴ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 501-502. Sultan Abdul Hamid relied on the Albanians for his palace guard and the First Army Corps, which guarded the capital. Several Albanians held high-ranking positions under Hamid's rule.

Albanian population.¹⁶⁵ Unlike the Empire's Slavs, these Albanians had no desire to abandon their faith and their advantageous status for a national cause like those of the Empire's Slavs.

The Albanians were shocked into action by the events of 1876-1878, which saw them briefly cut off from Constantinople by an enlarged Bulgaria. With the Porte's encouragement, the Albanian League formed in 1878 to act as political and military counter to Greek and Bulgarian territorial aspirations. Importantly, the Ottoman administration lifted the ban on Albanian language schools, thereby giving the Albanian national cause an opportunity to grow within the Empire. In 1879, the Society for the Printing of Albanian Writings was established in Constantinople and began encouraging the translation and publication textbooks in the Albanian language. Consisting of Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim Albanians, the society soon moved to the more liberal atmosphere of Bucharest and became further imbued with nationalism. Due to the hometown connection of some of the society's members, the first Albanian school was established in the town of Korce in 1885.¹⁶⁶ Situated just east of Kastoria, the Albanians of Korce were undoubtedly impressed by the education competition nearby. These Albanians were also primarily Christian Orthodox and lacked the privileges held by the Muslim Albanians to the north. Like other Christians, they had more reasons to be receptive to education in their own tongue.

Educational freedom for the Albanians in Korce was short lived. The Porte dissolved the Albanian League in 1881 and re-imposed its ban on Albanian schools in 1886. The Albanian school in Korce managed to stay open, albeit without support from the Porte, but had to endure constant hostility from the local authorities of the Greek Patriarchate. The school was repeatedly vandalized and three of the founding teachers were murdered, two were killed by the Ottoman authorities, and another was poisoned by a Greek priest.¹⁶⁷ The Patriarchate threatened to excommunicate anyone found reading or writing Albanian.¹⁶⁸ Still, the Ottoman authorities remained careful in their dealings with the Albanians. Moore found that Albanian nationalist agitators were either bought off or

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 505.

¹⁶⁶ Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912*, 134.

¹⁶⁷ Robert Carver, *The Accursed Mountains, Journeys in Albania* (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd, 1998), 62.

taken away to exile in Anatolia, where the offender “may be given authority over a district or province which will more than compensate him for his loss, but where he can work the empire no harm.”¹⁶⁹

Despite being oppressed within the Ottoman Empire, Albanians in Bucharest and Italy continued to publish books and school texts and impress Albanians who travelled abroad for trade or work. Albanian language education soon attracted more attention from foreign parties. An American missionary visiting Korce in 1889 wrote that it was a “favorable time” to begin work among the Albanians.¹⁷⁰ Missionary schools were established in Korce, but, according to Brailsford, they could only get pupils who were Protestant converts or whose families lived “beyond the immediate influence of the Bishop of Koritza.”¹⁷¹ Furthermore, the Ottomans threatened “lifelong exile” for any Muslim father who dared to send his child to the Protestant school.¹⁷² The Austrians got involved through their consulate in Bitola by granting scholarships for students to study under the Albanian chair of the University in Vienna.¹⁷³ The fact that such candidates were available points to the existence of secret Albanian schools in southwest Macedonia. Austrian Consuls were also distributing Albanian texts published in Bucharest to Albanians, of all religions, who were eager for Albanian language education.¹⁷⁴ Known for being deeply divided along religious and tribal lines, Albanian language education became a unifying force. As the *London Times* reported from Bitola in 1898:

The Albanian movement has hardly as yet taken a definite shape. The turbulent Albanians chiefs are for the most part at feud with one another, and are only united in their demand for the establishment of schools in which their own language will be taught.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁸ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 505.

¹⁶⁹ Fredrick Moore, *The Balkan Trail*, 225.

¹⁷⁰ Rev. J. W. Baird, “Albania,” in *Reports and Letters of American Missionaries Referring to the Distribution of Nationalities in the Former Provinces of European Turkey 1858—1918*, ed. Vladimir A. Tsanoff, 37 (Sofia, 1919).

¹⁷¹ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia. Its Races and Their Future*, 258. Many Albanian teachers were imprisoned, yet this only served to turn Ottoman prisons into adult education centres as the teachers applied their talents behind bars.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 257. The school had become popular with the “Moslem gentry” of Korce.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 254. The premise, of course, was that students who studied in Vienna would become sympathetic to Austria.

¹⁷⁴ Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening 1878-1912*, 143.

¹⁷⁵ *London Times*, “The Situation in Macedonia,” April 14, 1898, p. 10.

This reverence of Albanian language instruction led Brailsford to comment that when an Albanian prince eventually took the throne of Skanderbeg, he would pronounce his pledge of duty “neither on Bible nor Koran. He will take his oath, if he be wise, on the Albanian spelling book.”¹⁷⁶

Albanian nationalism did spread through the limited number of Albanian schools, but lacking the political support of the Porte and the patronage of a state, it was not able to develop to anywhere near to the extent that did among the Bulgarians and Greeks, or even the Serbs or Vlachs. In the 1890s, Albanian cries for autonomy, tax revolts, and defiance against being disarmed were localized grievances. What Albanian nationalism did exist did not inspire the will to overthrow the authority of the Porte. Muslim Albanians continued to enjoy their favoured status and during the 1903 Ilinden Uprising proved their loyalty to the Sultan by ravaging Slav and Vlach villages and pursuing rebel bands in the hills.

As was the case for Muslim Albanians, other Macedonian Muslim populations were not offered anything more than rudimentary, religious education, excepting for the select few who attended state schools. Non-Albanian Muslims in Macedonia were composed of Turks who had migrated from other parts of the Empire, notably Bosnia, after 1878, and of Slavs who had converted to Islam, known in Macedonia as “*Torbeshi*” or “*Pomaks*.” Gradually, the Ottoman government began to create more government schools to unite the Muslim groups as one against Christians and to build patriotism.¹⁷⁷ Lessons were taught in Turkish and attendance at these schools was mandatory, although truancy was not usually punished. Quite often, the teachers were also hodjas of local mosques. Islamic colleges (*Medressa*) could be found in provincial towns throughout the Empire, offering theological education in classical Arabic. As noted by Lucy Garnett during her travels in the Ottoman Empire in 1903, secular state schools (*Idadiyeh*) were “very inadequate in number.”¹⁷⁸ Modern schools based on European models continued to graduate generations of bureaucrats and officers under the tutelage of French professors,

¹⁷⁶ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia. Its Races and Their Future*, 262. Brailsford noticed how Albanian spelling books were passed around secretly as contraband. Some were kept in the American school in Korce as though they were museum pieces.

¹⁷⁷ Charles and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977), 226.

¹⁷⁸ Lucy M. Garnett, *Turkish Life in Town and Country* (New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1904), 202.

but these schools remained elitist. Moreover, Garnett commented that the anti-liberalism of Sultan Abdul Hamid was proving to be increasingly detrimental to secular education.¹⁷⁹

Although there was an elite class in Constantinople that knew the ways of the West and could converse in French, the Muslims of the countryside were not even literate in basic Ottoman Turkish. The persisting belief amongst the religious elite was that Muslims did not require the sort of modern, literary education that was being so eagerly sought after by the Christians of the Empire. Garnett found that calligraphy and seal engraving remained esteemed occupations in 1903 and that there were still craftsmen who copied books by hand: “to this day the Turks prefer a beautiful manuscript to a printed book.”¹⁸⁰ This was the case in the capital and was even more apparent in the towns of Macedonia. In 1903, Frederick Moore observed that a Turkish letter writer in Skopje doing a brisk business taking dictation at the market:

Christians do not patronise his talents, for every Christian community, thanks to the propagandas, there are several peasants who can read and write; but Mohamedans, faithful to the wishes of the Padisha, abstain from the corruption of education, and thereby make the letter writer necessary.¹⁸¹

The Jews of Macedonia were like the Muslims in that they were largely content with their place in the Ottoman Empire. However, they had their own struggle against the old theocratic order for a more secular education. The Jewish presence in Macedonia dated back over two millennia at the time. Their communities were dominated by Spanish Jews who had found refuge in the Ottoman theocracy after the Spanish Inquisition. As “people of the book” the Jews had their own *millet* and their own religion-based schools. They made up the majority of the population in the vital port of Thessaloniki, and small Jewish communities existed in provincial towns like Skopje and Kastoria. As was the case for the Greeks, Jewish merchants were influenced by the ways of Western Europe and sent their children to study there. Moise Allatini, who was among those sent, became a leading advocate of secular education after studying medicine in Italy in the mid-

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 204.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 208.

¹⁸¹ Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail*, 198.

nineteenth century.¹⁸² Allantini returned to Macedonia and established a secular school in 1856. Although it lasted for only five years, in that time it provided foreign language training to graduates who belonged to an influential generation which could communicate with the West and understood the cultural and commercial value of secular education. Foreign organizations rushed in to meet the ensuing demand for this type of education. The most prominent of these was the Alliance Israelite Universelle, which established mixed secular and religious Jewish schools, teaching not only commerce and languages to the middle classes, but also trades and crafts to the poor. Jewish secular education flourished as Thessaloniki as it became a booming commercial centre in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁸³

Secular instruction did provoke reactions from conservative rabbis who, like their counterparts in the Greek Church, derived benefit from the theocratic order. According to Rena Molho, tensions peaked in 1873 when students defied Jewish religious conventions. The Great Rabbi tried to persuade the Ottoman authorities to act, but intervention on the part of the French consulate resulted in the rabbi losing his power to arrest. The event marked a watershed for the secularists and rabbis were sympathetic to secular schools in future. The widespread appearance of French as the preferred foreign language of instruction in the Ottoman Empire, allowed French culture to make its own particular inroads in Thessaloniki. As was the case for competing national movements, the French nationalist movement found schools to be “the most perfect centres of their propaganda.”¹⁸⁴ Brailsford encountered a “witty” French consul who mused that Macedonia could be made French with a million francs of funding: “He would preach that the Macedonians were descendants of the French crusaders who conquered Salonica in the twelfth century, and the francs would do the rest.”¹⁸⁵ While the consul was being facetious, his comments demonstrate an understanding of the propaganda value which accrued as schools spread nationalism in Macedonia. In 1906, the French established a

¹⁸² Rena Molho, “Education in the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki in the Beginning of the Twentieth Century,” *Balkan Studies* 34, no. 2 (1992): 260.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 264. According to Molho, the Alliance schools were so successful that in some neighbourhoods the Greeks asked to merge their schools with the Alliance schools.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 267.

¹⁸⁵ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia. Its Races and Their Future*, 103.

Lycee Francais in Thessaloniki to extend their influence to all the peoples of the city.¹⁸⁶ They were not the only Great Power to do so. Prior to this, the Austrians and Italians had been establishing fully secular schools in Kosovo and Albania, in order to gain more influence in Macedonia. The establishment of Russian schools prompted the British to demand that the Ottoman Empire recognize more Protestant schools.¹⁸⁷ Over half a century after American Protestants had established the first foreign schools in Macedonia, Great Power governments had finally grasped the importance of education in the Ottoman Empire and were establishing schools of their own to extend their influence in the Sultan's territory.

At the turn of the century, the Protestants were still hard at work teaching, if not preaching, in a network of schools throughout the main towns of Macedonia. Via their longstanding practice of winning converts through direct reading of the bible, the Protestants continued to subsidize the national movements of Balkan Christians through their schools. The Protestant school set up for the Albanians of Korce in 1889 helped Albanian language education survive. Like the Slavs and Armenians, the Albanians benefited from the American missionaries' belief that all people should have the right to be educated in their own tongue. In 1896, Reverend Lewis Bond wrote about how the Albanians of Korce could only receive schooling in Greek: "The people love their own language, which alone is spoken in their homes. Can't we do more for them, somehow?"¹⁸⁸ For all their goodwill, there was considerable opportunism in the Protestants' charity. This is evident when it is considered that they took up the cause of Albanian language instruction not long after the Porte reinstated its ban on Albanian schools.

¹⁸⁶ Leon Sciaky, *Farewell to Salonica City at the Crossroads* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2003), 152. As a bored eleven-year-old boy Sciaky was among the first to attend the new French school with classmates who "represented a fair cross-section of the heterogeneous population of Salonica." Sciaky wrote that Jewish children in particular, like himself, came to identify closely with France due to love of secular learning, French culture and because they saw themselves as "intellectual waifs, unclaimed and uncared for by our country of birth." As a teenager, Sciaky requested French citizenship and flew the French tricolour from his bedroom window.

¹⁸⁷ *London Times*, "Protestant Schools in Turkey," December 2, 1902, p. 5. The Times article states that new Russian and French schools were sanctioned after a French naval demonstration in the Aegean. The British Ambassador argued that the Porte was in no position to refuse the request after sanctioning the Russian and French schools.

Protestant schools continued to be mutually beneficial for the missionaries and the peoples of the Balkans. Well-attended schools allowed the Protestants to claim success. Concurrently, enrolment in Protestant schools gave those interested a higher standard of education tailored to their needs and in their language. The American Missionary Board had primary schools in several towns around Macedonia and secondary schools in Samokov, Thessaloniki and Bitola. Still, these schools were relatively few in number and generally tended to serve the elites. Frederick Moore described the American school in Bitola as “a sort of select seminary for the better classes.”¹⁸⁹ With a student body of Greeks, Vlachs, Bulgarians and Albanians, this school was run by two American women with instruction presumably being conducted in English. It was one of the many girls’ schools that the Americans established around Macedonia and the Near East, and some members of its teaching staff were graduates of the American school in Samokov.¹⁹⁰ While these Protestant teachers emphasized the importance of being a good housewife, they also taught young women to undertake charitable campaigns in their communities and to assert themselves. Such schools were a novelty if not a sensation in the strictly patriarchal societies of the Balkans, where women were customarily confined to domestic servitude. After spending time in the mountain villages with a guerrilla force, the American reporter Albert Sonnichsen was quite impressed at the sight of uniform-clad American mission schoolgirls marching through the streets of Florina.¹⁹¹ Education at missionary schools gave Balkan women the means and support to pursue independent livelihoods, usually as teachers, or to venture further a field through the missionary network, even as far as the United States.¹⁹² Protestant education empowered Balkan

¹⁸⁸ Rev. Lewis Bond, “Kortcha and the Albanians,” in *Reports and Letters of American Missionaries Referring to the Distribution of Nationalities in the Former Provinces of European Turkey*, ed. Vladimir A. Tsanoff, 101 (Sofia, 1919).

¹⁸⁹ Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail*, 142.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Albert Sonnischen, *Confessions of a Macedonian Bandit* (New York: Duffield and Company, 1909), 100.

¹⁹² Teresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2003), 86. Katerina Tsilka became a famous graduate of the missionary schools providing a good, if atypical, example of the schools’ ability to empower women and offer them alternatives to a traditional life. She entered the Protestant school in her village at age six and managed to convert most of her family. Her father attempted to marry her when she turned thirteen but Katerina stood the groom up at the altar and “threw in her lot with the missionaries, who offered not only a modern education but a stepping stone to the West.” She taught briefly in Bansko before going to America for eight years where she worked, studied education and nursing and eventually married an Albanian convert to Protestantism. The couple returned to the Balkans in 1900.

women and must account for some of the involvement of women in the revolutionary movement as teachers, managers, spies and, in some cases, as guerrilla fighters. As Dimitra Giannuli concludes, women in the “Near East”

were selective in the aspects of American culture they adopted. During the missionary stage they largely rejected proselytism, yet they embraced western education ideas and ideologies, lifestyles and many aspects of western material culture.¹⁹³

Whether by design or not, Protestant missionary schools from Robert College in Constantinople to the village schools of the rural Balkans created revolutionaries amongst the Macedonian populations just as they had done with the Greeks, Bulgarians and Armenians. As summarized by Brailsford: “If they have not made Protestants, they have made relatively well-educated men who found the stagnation and oppression of the Turkish East completely unendurable.”¹⁹⁴

Quality of Education

What of the quality of education during the education race? With hundreds of schools competing for pupils, one might assume that it would have been high in order to attract new students. However, that was not necessarily the case. H.R. Wilkinson made the following comment in his 1951 study:

If the number of schools functioning in this region at the end of the century had been an indication of cultural progress, then surely Macedonia must have been a region of enlightenment and scholarship without parallel in Eastern Europe.¹⁹⁵

The best that can be said about the quality of education in Macedonia during the education race was that it varied. Students studying in larger towns could expect a relatively high quality of education and have the option of attending a secondary school. But most people in Macedonia lived in villages and did not go on to secondary school. While some villages had well-supplied primary school buildings, others held classes in

¹⁹³ Dimitra Giannuli, “Errand of Mercy” *American Women Missionaries in the Near East, 1820-1930*, *Balkan Studies* 39 (1998): 261.

¹⁹⁴ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia Its Races and Their Future*, 74.

¹⁹⁵ H.R. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics*, 119.

churches or in private homes with few resources.¹⁹⁶ Education in village schools was anything but typical. For example, around 1900, Exarchate village schools in the Melnik area still had first graders writing on trays of sand and older students using ink made from soot.¹⁹⁷ Students might face long walks to school and, esteemed as education was, daily chores still took precedence. Many did not enjoy a full school day, attending lessons before or after fulfilling their duties at home and completing their lessons in the fields and pastures.¹⁹⁸ Typically, rural children might only go to school in an offhanded fashion for a few years. This was just long enough for them to acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, and to grasp the glory of “their” national history from stories told by the teacher and through the magic of the printed word.¹⁹⁹

Generally, the best teachers taught in the towns. Those sent to the villages typically did not graduate at the top of their classes; although some were leaders of political movements. Village teachers were more likely to lack formal teacher training; many had no qualifications other than having come through the given school system themselves. They were more interested in politics and resorted to teaching out of an obligation to their given movement or because teaching was the only job they could get. Consequently, they were likely to be frequently absent from class. Travelling through southern Macedonia in 1900, G.F. Abbott encountered a Greek teacher about whom he said: “He was, as I said before, a teacher in a village school, but teaching was only a relaxation to him: politics were the serious occupation of his life.”²⁰⁰ Abbott met another Greek teacher who was seeking a teaching post in lieu of anything better to do: “...a second Greek master on the lookout for a post, which, however, being an unambitious and unversatile youth, with not taste or talent for a parliamentary career, he easily found a few days later.”²⁰¹ Abbott’s observations, along with those of other turn of the century observers, further illustrate the political role of teachers and the large scale of the

¹⁹⁶ Stoyan Pribichevich, *Macedonia: Its Peoples and History* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 109.

¹⁹⁷ Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 106.

¹⁹⁸ Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, 98; Irwin T. Sanders, *Balkan Village* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1949), 117. Sanders’ account comes from his field work during the interwar period on a Bulgarian village in the Rila Mountains near the border with Macedonia. Little, it appears, had changed in some villages thirty years later.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ G.F. Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour in Macedonia*, 93.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

campaigns being waged by the competing nations and organizations. Quality of pedagogy was, by in large, a secondary concern. Teaching was politics enacted by scholastic means.

Conclusion

The authors of the Carnegie Endowment's report on the origins of the Balkan Wars maintain that schools in Macedonia were auxiliaries of national movements. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, quantity took precedence over quality as education was used to spread nationalist propaganda in a heated battle for the hearts, minds and tongues of the residents of Macedonia. Results varied in this propaganda war as the competitive nature of the educational struggle and the overlapping claims to territory did not allow any one movement to establish complete, uncontested dominance over large portions of Macedonia. The greatest significance of the education race was that it provided settings for scholarly inquiry and pulpits for national agitation via the establishment of hundreds of schools and the distribution of thousands of books. Thereby, the education race produced new classes of graduates who then became teachers and the leaders of new generations of more radicalized national movements. Finally, it bears mentioning that most education in Ottoman Macedonia, however nationalistically charged, did give many people a basic grounding in numeracy and literacy. Whether they became revolutionaries or not, students that stayed in school long enough obtained skills and sensibilities that set them apart from Macedonia's peasants, merchants, priests and administrators. Education thus produced a middle class that stood ready to perform bureaucratic roles in a future state, be it a 'phantom' state or a sovereign one. Anastasia Karakasidou credits education for easing the transition to Greek rule in 1913 for the townspeople of Assiros near Thessaloniki:

Yet the importance of Greek education was not measurable in terms of grade scores, graduation rolls, or placement in institutions of higher learning. It lay, rather, in the transmission of basic Greek lessons, especially language, math, religion, and history, to local children. From the ranks of those educated at the turn of the century came the politicians, administrators, and record keepers of the new local township bureaucracy that was established following the advent of formal Greek rule...Religion and language studies were critical to the formation

of a concept of “nation” in the minds of students, which came to be legitimized or refined into the “natural order” of the cosmos.²⁰²

At the turn of the century, it was still a question of whose “natural order” would prevail in Macedonia, but events were moving quickly. An organization of Macedonian-born teachers was preparing to take its struggle out of the classroom and launch a direct challenge to Ottoman authority.

²⁰² Anastasia N. Karakasidou, *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood*, 98-99.

Chapter IV: IMRO: A Product of Education

Of Teachers and Students

During the education race, Exarchate schools became hotbeds of Bulgarian nationalism. Teachers explained the injustices of the past to students living in an unjust present. The students took the political lessons in, reading forbidden books and hatching secret plots. As these student radicals came of age, they became impatient with the lack of change. Foreign education increased their hatred of Ottoman dominance, but also made many of them distrustful of the intentions of neighbouring states. In the 1890s a new class of intellectuals emerged, determined to work independently for an autonomous Macedonia. These men were almost all teachers. They formed the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) and took jobs in the Exarchate schools in order to expand their organization and spread their message. In time, they created a parallel administration through which they prepared the peasants for an armed uprising. Unfortunately for these idealistic teachers, IMRO was fraught with difficulties and internal divisions. The long awaited Ilinden Uprising of 1903 was a disaster from which the organization never recovered. However, IMRO did prove successful in galvanizing disparate elements of local identity into a distinctly Macedonian national movement. Although they did not realize autonomy or independence for Macedonia, these teachers became the fathers of Macedonian nationalism.

Revolutionary Stirrings

Conditions in post 1878 Macedonia created a breeding ground for discontent that the politics of the education race exacerbated. The disappointment of the Treaty of Berlin prompted armed resistance to the reinstatement of Ottoman rule until 1882. Thousands of Slavs fled Ottoman Macedonia for the refuge of the Bulgarian Principality. These

refugees formed charitable societies and organizations dedicated to the liberation of Macedonia, such as the “Bulgarian-Macedonian League.”¹ Communities of Slavs from Macedonia in Constantinople and Athens lobbied the Porte and the Great Power representatives for full implementation of Article 23 of the Berlin Treaty. Some appealed for a constitution for Macedonia.²

However, intervention and applied reform were not forthcoming in the 1880s. The Ottomans played the national movements off against one another and let lawlessness reign in the countryside of Macedonia. Any hope of unilateral Russian intervention was dashed by Russia’s withdrawal of support for Bulgaria after the 1885 union with Rumelia. Several Slavs from Macedonia fought in the Bulgarian ranks against Serbia in the war of 1885. It was hoped that the victorious Bulgarian army would move against the Sultan’s forces in Macedonia, but Bulgaria consolidated its gains and stood firm. Stephen Stambolov’s policy of “peaceful penetration” through the Exarchate schools and rapprochement with the Porte was realistic, but seen as treasonous to refugees anticipating a return to their homes in Macedonia. Some worried that the entrenchment of Bulgarian nationalism in Macedonia would overwhelm local identity and power bases and lead to the division of Macedonia between rival powers.³ During the 1880s, Macedonian societies continued to be formed in Bulgaria in the name of charity. To varying degrees, these societies became centres of political activity and drew the ire of Stambolov, who forced several closures.⁴ Stambolov’s policies and the contrast between life in the Bulgarian Principality and life in Ottoman Macedonia were contributing to a growing political schism. Ideas of Macedonian autonomy began to gain currency.

A distinctive identity had begun to develop amongst some of the Slavs of Macedonia in the mid-nineteenth century. As discussed in Chapter Two, this was first

¹ Blazhe Ristovski, *Macedonia and the Macedonian People*, (Vienna, Skopje: SIMAG Holding, 1999), 162. The Society had originally been called the Macedonian League, but was renamed after intervention by the Bulgarian authorities. Other organizations founded in Bulgaria in the 1880s included the Bulgarian-Macedonian Charitable Society (1882); the Society for Helping Impoverished Macedonians (1884); the Macedonian Society for Collecting Assistance for the Suffering Macedonians (1885); and the Central Committee Fighting for the Liberation of Macedonia from Turkish Slavery (1885).

² *Ibid.*, 167.

³ Blazhe Koneski, *Towards the Macedonian Renaissance, Macedonian Textbooks of the Nineteenth Century* (Skopje: Institute of National History, 1961), 5

http://www.gate.net/~mango/Macedonian_renaissance.html (accessed June 15, 2005).

⁴ Blazhe Ristovski, *Macedonia and the Macedonian People*, 181.

manifested by local interests, the popularity of the Uniate Church and the publication of textbooks in the “Western Bulgarian Dialect.” Later, the codification of the “Eastern Dialect” as official Bulgarian, the establishment of the Exarchate in Constantinople and the creation of the Bulgarian Principality furthered feelings of separateness for the Slavs of Macedonia. The separatist advocates were intellectuals (i.e. teachers) who had been students of famous mid-century teachers like Jordan Dzinot and the Miladinov brothers. One of the most outspoken was Gorgi Pulevski. According to Victor Freidman, Pulevski published three textbooks between 1873 and 1880 in which he expressed “explicitly separatist sentiments,” and proclaimed that a separate Slavic nation of Macedonians inhabited Macedonia.⁵ Later, Pulevski went to Sofia and established a “Slavonic-Macedonian” literary society in 1888 only to have it closed by Stambolov’s police.⁶ Koneski notes that the textbooks and collections of poetry produced during this time contained a number “uncertainties” in the form of reliance on local dialects and foreign words.⁷ This indicated a reaction to Bulgarian literary dominance and a determination to preserve local linguistic tendencies. Local concern also existed on an economic level as merchants and guilds feared domination by their larger Bulgarian counterparts in the principality and in Constantinople.⁸ Despite local grievances and the popularity of certain books, no cohesive Macedonian national movement emerged. In the perpetual insecurity of the 1880s, most of the population was preoccupied with survival. In the setting of the education race, local intellectuals could at least find employment in schools, where they could proselytize their books and opinions to the next generation.

The education race aided the cultivation of a Macedonian identity that created an intellectual-led movement. Serbia assisted this development under the direction of Stojan Novakovic by publishing mixed Macedonian-Serbian grammars. The intent was to instil

⁵ Victor A. Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity” in *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics*, ed. Victor Roudometof, 183 (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2000).

⁶ Blazhe Ristovski, *Macedonia and the Macedonian People*, 177.

⁷ Blazhe Koneski, “Macedonian” in *The Slavic Literary Languages: Formation and Development*, ed. Alexander M. Schenker and Edward Stankiewicz, 59 (New Haven: Yale Concilium on International Area Studies, 1980). Perhaps because of this lack of linguistic cohesion, Pulevki called for the composition of a Macedonian grammar.

⁸ Blazhe Koneski, *Towards the Macedonian Renaissance*, 5.

a Serbian identity by the time students finished elementary school.⁹ However, when a cohort of students, who had gone to Belgrade on scholarships, discovered the purpose was to Serbianize them, they promptly left to continue their studies in Sofia. This cohort worked with other Macedonian-born students to establish the Young Macedonian Literary Society in Sofia in 1891. The Society began publication of the magazine “*Loza*” in January of 1892.¹⁰ The publication was banned by the Bulgarian authorities for being separatist, since the articles appeared in a “slightly Macedonianized variant of the Bulgarian language.”¹¹ In Macedonia, local church and school committees espousing a “Macedonian character” were formed in Macedonian towns throughout the 1880s.¹² Some outspoken individuals publicized nationalistic declarations.¹³ Six teachers from an Exarchate school in Kastoria proposed to drop Greek and Bulgarian and make Macedonian the school’s language of instruction for the 1892-93 school year. After protests by the Greek Bishop, the school was closed down.¹⁴ Proclamations of a distinctive Macedonian identity amongst the Slavs of Macedonia became bolder in the early 1890s, but these were mostly “voices in the wilderness.” There was no leadership to unify the disparate elements into a movement capable of asserting itself in the Education Race. It was the generation raised during the education race that would constitute a Macedonian movement.

Children born to Slav families in Macedonia around 1870 grew up living with the consequences of the Berlin Treaty. During childhood, they felt the joy of liberation and the disappointment of renewed Ottoman authority in 1878. As they grew older, they experienced the repression of the increasingly corrupt Ottoman officials who favoured the Greeks. Some watched their fathers and uncles forced to work on Ottoman railway

⁹ Blazhe Koneski, “Macedonian,” 60. Novakovic proposed that the primer be two-thirds Macedonian and one-third Serbian. Serbian curricular content would increase as the students progressed.

¹⁰ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 84. Three of those associated with *Loza* become founding members of IMRO.

¹¹ Blazhe Ristovski, *Macedonia and the Macedonian People*, 182.

¹² *Ibid.*, 178.

¹³ Blazhe Koneski, “Macedonian,” 59. Temko Popov, a ‘younger contemporary’ of Gorgi Pulevski, said in 1888 that “the national spirit in Macedonia today has reached such a degree that if Jesus Christ himself came down from heaven he could not persuade a Macedonian that he is a Bulgarian or Serb.” Such sentiment would realistically be that of high-minded young intellectuals and could hardly reflect the sentiments of the peasant masses.

¹⁴ Victor A. Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and Its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity,” 186.

projects.¹⁵ Others, like future revolutionary Boris Sarafov, witnessed family members deported to Asia Minor for promoting education.¹⁶ For children from wealthier families, reading rooms and enrolment in the remaining Exarchate schools offered some comfort amidst the unpleasant reality. But knowledge produced discontentment. Exarchate schools provided forums for bitter teachers to impress students and explain the politics of the situation. Exarchate gymnasiums (secondary schools) became hotbeds of revolutionary thought as simultaneous agitation and inquiry enlivened a variety of schemes of how this emergent generation could shed the Ottoman yoke.¹⁷

Established in 1880, the Bulgarian gymnasium in Thessaloniki became the cradle of the future Macedonian revolutionary movement. The significance of the school is best exemplified by the experience of its most famous graduate, Gotse Delchev, one of the future leaders of the Macedonian movement. Delchev was raised in the then staunchly Exarchist town of Kilkis just north of Thessaloniki. His father, a successful merchant, reminded the young Delchev to study hard or his mother would be beaten as punishment.¹⁸ An excellent student, Delchev read widely at the town's Bulgarian reading room and was impressed with revolutionary literature. Disinterested in his father's business, the family sent him to board at the Bulgarian school in Thessaloniki. Delchev came to lead a secret revolutionary group at the school. He reportedly beat up other students who betrayed the group's various plots or dared to slander the revered Bulgarian revolutionaries like Vasil Levski. Delchev also distributed revolutionary literature and biographies of Garibaldi and George Washington that he acquired via the Austrian postal service from the school's graduates studying in Bulgaria.¹⁹

Graduates of Bulgarian schools were faced with few career prospects. In the superior urban schools, like the one in Thessaloniki, students received an education on par with education in Western Europe. But, after graduating, they returned to the

¹⁵ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 39.

¹⁶ Christ Anastasoff, *The Tragic Peninsula. A History of the Macedonian Movement for Independence since 1878* (St. Louis: Blackwell Wielandy Co., 1938), 57. In 1885, a young Sarafov watched his father and grandfather led in chains through the streets of Thessaloniki and set into exile in Asia Minor. The two men had been active in the Exarchate schools.

¹⁷ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movement 1893-1903* (N.C.: Duke University Press, 1988), 28; Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question 1893-1908*, 35.

¹⁸ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 35.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 70-71.

comparatively primitive realities of a state that had little to offer their enlightened minds. As Duncan Perry explains, education enabled them to better recognize the nature of their oppression and instilled in them the feeling that "...it was necessary to change the social contract."²⁰ Delchev apparently arrived at this conclusion quickly and left school early to follow the path of his former classmate, Boris Sarafov, by enrolling in the Bulgarian Military Academy in Sofia in 1891.²¹

The new environment was not to Delchev's liking. He progressed at the military academy but was profoundly disappointed with life in Bulgaria. The brimming trade and commerce of Sofia coupled with the repressive policies of Stambolov in no way resembled the image he had of Levski's free Bulgaria.²² "Why didn't I stay in Salonika, why didn't I finish school there, why didn't I become a teacher?"²³ He asked himself after his first year at the academy. Still, Delchev stayed on in Sofia, socializing with other Macedonian-born cadets, attending the meetings of the Macedonian societies that existed, and finding some solace with the Bulgarian socialists.²⁴ He was expelled shortly before his graduation in 1894 for possessing socialist literature at the academy. Apparently this mattered little to Delchev as he had already resolved to resign his first commission and return to Macedonia to work as a schoolteacher. He hoped to organize a movement with other like-minded teachers. The future exceeded his expectations.

Several of Delchev's peers, educated in the Exarchate gymnasiums and abroad, concluded that the suffering of the masses in Macedonia could only be alleviated through revolution. Dame Gruev was the son of a mason from the town of Smilevo, west of Bitola whose experiences led him to believe that the people of Macedonia needed to strive for autonomous status within the Ottoman Empire. Gruev was one of the students who took a scholarship to study in Belgrade after attending the Bulgarian gymnasium in Thessaloniki. Along with other students from Macedonia, he left Belgrade upon realizing that the Serbs were interested in territorial expansion into Macedonia.²⁵ Gruev studied history in Sofia, and got involved in the Macedonian societies in the Bulgarian capital.

²⁰ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 143.

²¹ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 74.

²² *Ibid.*, 83.

²³ *Ibid.*, 84.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

But he soon became wary of Bulgarian expansionism and felt the wrath of Stambolov's police.²⁶ In 1891 he was implicated in the assassination of Bulgarian Finance Minister Hristo Belchev and jailed. Gruev was denied the right to complete his studies, and faced conscription into the Bulgarian army for involvement in Macedonian activities. This false imprisonment was the tipping point for Gruev.²⁷ After his release, he returned to Macedonia and taught in Exarchate schools in his native Smilevo and nearby Prelep from 1891 to 1893.

In 1893 Gruev was working in a bookstore in Thessaloniki and spending his time in the company of other Macedonian-born Exarchate school teachers. Whilst philosophizing during the evening *corso* on November 1, 1893, Gruev and fellow teacher Andon Dimitrov encountered a third teacher, Ivan Hadzhinikolov, and a heated discussion on the future of Macedonia ensued. The three teachers agreed to form a revolutionary committee with a mandate to prepare the Macedonian people to liberate themselves from Ottoman rule. Two evenings later, they met at Hadzhinikolov's residence to lay the foundation for their revolutionary organization with two other like-minded teachers, Petur Poparsov and Hristo Batandzhiev, and a medical doctor, Hristo Tatarchev, who was the medical doctor at the Exarchate gymnasium.²⁸ Although not the moving intellectual force, Dr. Tatarchev enlightened his fellow conspirators with stories from his recent student days in Geneva and Berlin. As was the case with previous generations of Greek and Bulgarian students, Tatarchev's return to the Balkans left him disgusted with the lack of education and the abusive conduct of the Ottoman authorities.²⁹ His experiences, combined with those of Gruev, Hadzhinikolov and Poparsov, who had spent time in Bulgaria, led the group to believe that they had "an educational mission" to teach the people of Macedonia, and prepare them for a general uprising against the Porte.

²⁵ Ibid., 96. Most of the students left when the Society of St. Sava tried to forbid them from reading Bulgarian books.

²⁶ Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy*, 74.

²⁷ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 36.

²⁸ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 98; Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 37-38. At the time, Tatarchev was treating Gruev for eczema.

²⁹ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 38.

Together, the six founded the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) in 1893.³⁰

The founders of IMRO believed they could agitate successfully to win the loyalty of the Slavic population and deliver the military training necessary to turn bandits and peasant farmers into revolutionary forces. They resolved to lobby for the application of Article 23 of the Berlin Treaty which, they believed, would lead to their goal of political autonomy for Macedonia. They soon adopted many of the statues and codes of Levski and the Bulgarian teacher revolutionaries of the 1870s. As with previous generations of Balkan revolutionaries, IMRO adopted the slogan “Freedom or Death” and created a masonic ritual for new members, requiring them to swear an oath over a bible crossed with a dagger and pistol.³¹

In 1894, the founding members of IMRO began expanding their network by recruiting intellectuals throughout Macedonia. Gruev toured central and western Macedonia from Stip to Ohrid, enlisting the support of sympathetic Exarchist teachers. He presided over numerous meetings of small groups which became independent cells ignorant of one another and linked loosely to IMRO’s central committee. Revolutionary books and magazines about the exploits of Garibaldi, George Washington and the Bulgarian revolutionaries were distributed to inspire audiences and help them envision liberation. Teachers were quick to get involved and take the literature to their students and discuss its sentiments with parents and other townsfolk.³² The leadership met in August of 1894 in Dr. Tatarchev’s hometown of Resen west of Bitola. There, they recognized that attracting more Exarchate teachers and high level students to the organization would be the key to their future success.³³

The expanding Exarchate school system was ideally suited to IMRO’s goals. It gave them the means to spread their message and recruit new members. It also served as

³⁰ Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question*, 1998. The organization was known as the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (MRO) and later as the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and of Adrianople (IMROA). It is most commonly referred by its 1905 incarnate, IMRO.

³¹ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 39-40.

³² Nadine Lange-Akhund *The Macedonian Question, 1893—1903*, 37. Lange-Akhund notes that the teachers tried to win over craftsmen, merchants and small businessmen. IMRO preached of a unified peasant uprising, but most of the leadership considered themselves middle class and sought to influence the middle classes and then work on the peasantry. It was a thoroughly middle class organization and tensions with the peasantry would arise in the future.

³³ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 41.

a ready-made infrastructure which IMRO members could exploit while ostensibly labouring as humble teachers.³⁴ Fourteen of the sixteen delegates present at the Resen meeting were teachers. IMRO was an organization dominated by the ideas and ideals of its teacher-dominated executive. At the Resen meeting, they divided Macedonia into seven departments and subsections, before leaving for their teaching posts across the land. They would continue to enlist more teachers and spread the gospel of revolution.

Spreading the Word

In 1894, IMRO embarked upon a far-reaching campaign to win over Exarchate teachers and other sympathetic members of the Slavic intelligentsia.³⁵ The Exarchate's school system provided a framework for IMRO and the classrooms offered a venue for teachers to indoctrinate the sons and daughters of peasants with their ideas and values. To IMRO's advantage, the Exarchate often posted its teachers to different locations each year and hired roving school inspectors from the top of its teaching ranks. It did not take IMRO long to take full advantage of the education system from which its greatest orators and organizers drew their salaries.

IMRO was quick to find and sign up new members. As an experienced teacher, Dame Gruev became the head teacher in the Stip district, where he soon received an energetic new teacher: Gotse Delchev. Gruev and Delchev were able to recruit a loyal following and turn the Stip district into an IMRO stronghold within two years. In her 1978 biography of Gotse Delchev, Mercia MacDermott devotes a chapter to Delchev and Gruev's early work in the Stip district, vividly illustrating how IMRO used the Exarchate schools to propagate its cause. It is worth examining these stories in some detail as Delchev and Gruev's methods and practices work became the standard for other IMRO teacher agitators.³⁶

³⁴ Such was the state of the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria that any man with "no visible means of support" was branded a spy. See: Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail*, 4.

³⁵ Christ Anastasoff, *The Tragic Peninsula*, 40. Priests and professional were recruited with varying degrees of success. Teachers remained the easiest group to win over since they had similar backgrounds and experiences. Teachers also had the most to gain from a new political order, as they would form the bureaucratic elite.

³⁶ Delchev and Gruev became and remain highly publicized and romanticized figures in the national history of both Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia.

By all accounts, Gruev and Delchev were perfect co-conspirators; Gruev as the shrewd organizer and Delchev as the romantic idealist. Gruev presided over the gymnasium in Stip while Delchev taught at the district's other gymnasium in the village of Novo Selo in the south of the district. Like his idol, Levski, Delchev did not rely on force and was well-liked by his pupils. He taught several subjects and was best known for instructing history, geography and French.³⁷ Some of his practices suggest he was hardening his students for revolutionary activities. He warned his students that he would not pass them if they could not jump over a bench and told them:

I shall thrash anyone that does not strike back when someone strikes at him. I shall cut off the tongue of anyone that spies on his schoolmates and reports to me. You must yourselves punish anyone you think has done wrong.³⁸

These convictions reflect Delchev's own experience as a student in Thessaloniki and IMRO's vow to severely punish treasonable actions within its ranks. Delchev was very pleased when none of his students exposed the leader of a group of students that started a fire in the town cemetery. For a show of collective punishment to the authorities, he had the students beat one another in public on the school porch.³⁹

Delchev's and Gruev's agitating and organizing extended outside of school hours. Along with other teachers in the organization, they set up adult "Sunday School" classes, where they gave lectures on the revolutionary struggles in Italy, the United States and Bulgaria. Often the audiences would move on to the main hall of the schools to sing patriotic songs. Delchev and Gruev dabbled in acting by performing in a series of revolutionary dramas in 1895.⁴⁰ Amid the bustle of market days in Stip, incoming peasants from the surrounding villages were invited to clandestine meetings at the school.⁴¹ The teachers signed up new members, designated numbers for them and put them into independent groups of ten.⁴² Membership lists and secret correspondence were

³⁷ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 104.

³⁸ Stoyan Christowe, *Heroes and Assassins*, (New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1935), 59. As a thirteen-year-old student, Delchev dealt with a student who betrayed a plot against a teacher by stabbing the boy in the back.

³⁹ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 105.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 103. According to MacDermott, IMRO teachers performed plays with strong revolutionary content such as *Ivanko* by Vasil Drumev, *Egmont* by Johann von Goethe and plays by Nilolai Gogol.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 102.

kept amid textbooks and student notebooks to avert suspicion.⁴³ Many weekends, school holidays and “diplomatic absences” were spent roving through the villages of the district in disguise, holding meetings, signing up new members and fundraising. During these excursions, Delchev was able to establish communication and transportation links over the mountains to Bulgaria through which correspondence, literature and weapons entered the Stip district.⁴⁴ By mid-1895, the teachers were turning the Stip school district into an IMRO stronghold with weapons stashed secretly in barns and houses.

Delchev and Gruev continued to work to organize districts. During the 1895-96 school year, Delchev took over from Gruev as the district’s head teacher. Now required to leave the classroom to inspect the schools of the district, Delchev easily coupled IMRO work with his official responsibilities.⁴⁵ A year later, he was posted to Bansko, where he further consolidated communication links between Macedonia and Bulgaria. He also established revolutionary networks from Samokov to Nevrokop. Delchev continued to work to import books and newspapers as well as guns and explosives. He believed that people needed to be educated, as well as materially supplied, to prepare them psychologically for the eventual uprising.⁴⁶ However, his tenure in Bansko was cut short after two months and he devoted himself full time to revolutionary work.

Gruev became head teacher for the Exarchate schools in the Thessaloniki district, where he circulated freely, organizing IMRO’s network. Gruev’s return to Thessaloniki also helped strengthen IMRO’s central committee.⁴⁷ Later, under the suspicion of the Ottoman police and Exarchate, Gruev was briefly incarcerated and demoted to a teaching post in Bitola in 1898. Once there, he simply resumed his work and turned the region into IMRO’s best organized and armed sector.⁴⁸

Other teachers were quick to follow the example set by Delchev and Gruev and work their ways into head teacher positions around Macedonia. Increasingly, they were able to use their authority to impose IMRO’s will on the running of the Exarchate’s school system. Hristo Matov was a teacher Gruev recruited in Thessaloniki in 1895.

⁴³ Ibid., 106.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 103.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 127.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 131.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 126.

Matov soon became director of the Exarchate's teacher training academy in Skopje and was able to extend his and IMRO's influence throughout the Skopje district. Matov's official capacity gave him the authority to appoint select graduates of the academy to teaching positions in the district, leading to more favourable results for IMRO.⁴⁹ Gyorche Petrov, another influential teacher, taught in the Bitola district for five years. Remembered by his students for his impassioned geography lessons, Petrov did not shy away from controversy. He openly criticized the running of the district's village schools, which did not go over well with the Exarchate authorities. Petrov was transferred to Thessaloniki in 1896 and soon teamed up with Delchev as IMRO's representatives in Sofia.⁵⁰

An intimidating presence, Petrov was chosen to journey to Constantinople in 1898 to lobby for the appointment of more IMRO members to the Exarchate schools posts. Petrov reportedly handed the head of the Exarchate's teaching department a list with the names of seventy teachers and the locations to appoint them. He gave the official three days to comply, which he did. Petrov also met with Exarch Joseph I and advised him not to interfere with IMRO's affairs. In subsequent years, the Exarchate usually met IMRO's requests and demands, yet tensions between IMRO and the Exarchate persisted.⁵¹

Through the late 1890s, IMRO's membership multiplied, attracting scores of teachers, students and intellectuals. By 1898, the Exarch himself admitted that forty-five percent of his teachers in Macedonia were IMRO members.⁵² The revolutionary rhetoric and personable manner of many of the teachers attracted impressionable young students. Upon graduation, many became teachers themselves, with IMRO helping to ensure that they got jobs. Hristo Silyanov, a graduating student of Gruev's, recalled the influence of his teachers, who were IMRO members:

We were constantly in contact with *our* teachers. We were their comrades. We visited them every Sunday, talked to them in the second person singular, smoked with them, and even stuffed our tobacco boxes with their tobacco. And we were proud, proud that they treated us like grown-up men, like revolutionaries, like

⁴⁸ Ibid., 180-182. Such was the state of the Ottoman prisons that Gruev continued to organize during his incarceration.

⁴⁹ Christ Anastasoff, *The Tragic Peninsula*, 36-37.

⁵⁰ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 151.

⁵¹ Ibid., 183-184.

⁵² Ibid., 183.

comrades in arms. The school year would quickly roll by, and then we would become exactly like them: we would preach the dangerous word to young and old and we would baptize them and, through our contempt for danger, we would regenerate the soul of the slaves.⁵³

Some students began agitating before they left school, touring the districts of their home regions during their summer break⁵⁴ Likely, IMRO tried where possible to have new teachers posted in or near their home towns or villages to maximize their influence. At least amongst students and fellow teachers, IMRO's message was proving to be very popular, and the organization continued to grow through the Exarchate school system.

Irrespective of ideological differences, IMRO owed its rapid expansion to the Exarchate school system. IMRO's growth in the 1890s coincided with the reestablishment of Exarchate bishoprics in most of Macedonia. IMRO's members despised Stephen Stambolov, but without Stambolov's diplomatic work, IMRO's task would have been considerably more difficult. The teachers of IMRO also imitated the policy of "peaceful penetration" by spreading propaganda, building membership and organizing through the schools. However, as it expanded, IMRO encountered no shortage of adversaries. One was a reactionary group under the Bulgarian military that had no time for the long-term strategies of idealist teachers.

The Supreme Committee for Macedonia and the Province of Adrianople was formed in Sofia in early 1895. The committee was made up of many Macedonians in Bulgaria who had conspired against Stambolov and consolidated Prince Ferdinand's power. The Supremists and IMRO pledged co-operation with each other, but fissures soon developed between the two organizations.⁵⁵ While both sought an autonomous Macedonia, the Supremists openly called for union with Bulgaria. There was a good deal of overlap between the memberships, but manifest differences in ideology and strategy were apparent. IMRO's leaders were teachers inspired by heroic revolutionaries and Socialism. The Supremist Committee had military men at the top of its ranks and was closely tied to the regency of Prince Ferdinand. Political developments and power struggles would strain relations between the two organizations.

⁵³ Hristo Silyanov, *Pisma i izpovedi na edin chetnik*, (Sofia: 1967), 41-43, quoted in Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 181.

⁵⁴ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 125.

⁵⁵ Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy*, 77.

In 1896, the Supremist leader, General Nikolaev, met with Delchev to offer valuable material support on the condition that IMRO recognize the authority of the Supremist leadership over IMRO. Delchev was incensed by the offer and frankly told Nikolaev that IMRO did not need help before spitting on the floor and storming out of the meeting. The General thought the notion of teacher-led peasants liberating themselves was absurd. He maintained that guerrilla forces needed to be organized in Bulgaria to invade and provoke support from Bulgaria and the Great Powers.⁵⁶ A small Supremist force under Boris Sarafov had briefly held Melnik in 1895 before being pushed away by Ottoman troops. The guerrillas retreated back across the border leaving the townspeople to suffer the repercussions and IMRO to curtail its activities.⁵⁷ Relations between the teachers of IMRO and the military men of the Supremists continued to be strained. IMRO needed the Supremists' material support while the Supremists required the legitimacy and networks IMRO had built up in Macedonia.

IMRO also faced mounting opposition from conservative elements in Macedonia loyal to the authority and strategies of the Exarchate. Delchev was criticized by the town's leaders of Bansko, who saw IMRO as a threat to their own privilege. They told him that: "they could not tolerate a headmaster who spent his time trying to set the world on fire instead of attending to his own business."⁵⁸ Neither could the Exarchate. In 1897, Exarch Joseph I took a more aggressive stance by denouncing IMRO teachers as atheists and trying to limit teaching appointments.⁵⁹ Some business leaders feared IMRO would get complete control over the Exarchate school system. They spread propaganda against IMRO, appealing to the peasants to trust in the Exarchate and Bulgaria to deliver their freedom. Ivan Garvanov, A Bulgarian born physics teacher at the Exarchate Secondary School in Thessaloniki, soon organized the Revolutionary Brotherhood to defend the Exarchate's influence in its own school system. Ironically, the Revolutionary Brotherhood sought to defend the "peaceful penetration" policy of the Exarchate by

⁵⁶ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 55.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁸ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotse Delchev*, 156. The Exarchate bishop in Nevrokop responsible for the teachers in the region confronted Delchev after complaints by the townspeople about Delchev's frequent absences from work. Delchev threatened the bishop in return before resigning in November of 1896.

⁵⁹ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 58.

committing acts of terror against IMRO.⁶⁰ The Revolutionary Brotherhood managed to recruit enough students and teachers to divide some Exarchate schools in the late 1890s, but it did pose a serious threat to IMRO. In September of 1900, Garvanov accepted Supremist mediation and, with reservation, merged the Revolutionary Brotherhood into IMRO.⁶¹

As it grew, IMRO faced a struggle to conceal itself. Personal profits could be made from duplicity and the land was awash with spies. It was tempting for an opportunistic or vengeful villager to disclose the whereabouts of a prominent IMRO member to the authorities. As a newcomer to patriotic agitation, future IMRO leader Yane Sandanski found this out the hard way. After he swore over an entire village to IMRO in the Strumica region, an informant's report to the Ottoman authorities sent Sandanski and his men retreating to the hills.⁶² In areas where the Greeks were properly organized, like Kastoria, those loyal to the Patriarchate passed along news of IMRO's advance to the Ottomans.⁶³ Increasingly, IMRO was the victim of its own growing popularity. Matters escalated when bandits robbed and murdered a wealthy Turkish man in the village of Vinica east of Stip in late 1897. During the subsequent investigation a woman broke down and confessed there were rifles stored in her house.⁶⁴ Further investigation and torture turned up more rifles and stores of dynamite. But perhaps more significantly, the authorities learned of the extent and nature of IMRO and who its leaders were:

The Porte learned an important lesson from the events of 1897. Many of those arrested in the post-Vinitza sweep were teachers, a fact which confirmed the authorities' belief that such people constituted a real threat to the empire. After 1897 all teachers became suspect and found themselves restricted to their native district for the slightest infraction.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ibid., 90. The Revolutionary Brotherhood was originally named the Brotherhood of Mercy. IMRO and the Revolutionary Brotherhood were both initially formed to arrest the spread of Serbian propaganda. When confronted by external threats, they did rally together. For instance, when a teacher at the Exarchate Gymnasium in Thessaloniki was murdered by a Serbian agent, the two organizations coordinated their efforts to hunt down the perpetrator. Dr. Tatachev treated Garvanov, who had been wounded during the murder. Still, despite their many mutual rivals, IMRO and the Revolutionary Brotherhood and the Supremists devoted considerable resources to feuding with one another.

⁶¹ Ibid., 94. Garvanov despised IMRO, especially IMRO's proselytizing in classrooms. The merger did little to temper Garvanov's abhorrence of his rival teachers.

⁶² Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 65.

⁶³ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia*, 55.

⁶⁴ Stoyan Christowe, *Heroes and Assassins*, (London: Gollanez, 1935), 52.

⁶⁵ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 78.

IMRO found many of its members abandoned the organization under Ottoman repression. The leaders struck back with guerrilla raids and more resolve to discipline internal dissent.⁶⁶ In the future, inspiration would be mixed with intimidation.

The Phantom State

IMRO needed to properly define itself and become more regimented to cope with its growth and security. The organization's 1896 congress held in Thessaloniki saw the implementation of a set of rules and regulations and the establishment of a hierarchical structure under a central committee. IMRO would formally operate under the following five principles:

1. The organization was founded in Macedonia so that was not to be considered "a Bulgarian weapon";
2. That is why its founders were "Macedonians";
3. Its political goal was to obtain autonomy status for Macedonia;
4. It must work secretly and in an independent fashion and without contacting the governments of the neighbouring states;
5. But it would ask for moral and material support from Bulgaria.⁶⁷

Executive powers rested with the Central Committee that was "everywhere and nowhere," but usually in Thessaloniki. Under the Central Committee, there were subsidiary regional, district and local committees with their own hierarchies. The leaders of ten person cells comprised the local committees. Members were to meet weekly, pay dues, be furnished with weapons and prepare for a mass uprising. Secrecy was vital and each level had its own internal and external police.⁶⁸

By working through the structure of the Exarchate school system, IMRO effectively created a shadow government administering its own state within the Ottoman Empire. The organization created its own revolutionary tribunals and justice system to negate the peasants' need for Ottoman law. IMRO insured communiqés, hectographed newspapers and revolutionary newspapers got to their destinations via its clandestine

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question 1893-1908*, 38.

⁶⁸ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 65-66.

postal service. The organization also imposed taxes to bring in badly needed revenue.⁶⁹ Brailsford found IMRO's "passion for method and detail" to be "remarkable. It had its correspondents in every centre, its couriers, its treasures, its experts for explosives, its medical service, its hired agents among the Turks, its archives, and its official records."⁷⁰ While many committees continued to function "semiautonomously," IMRO's resources and stockpiles grew along with membership after 1897.⁷¹ However, IMRO was increasingly resorting to terror to achieve its aims.

Increasingly, IMRO imposed its will violently. For the benefit of Slavic peasants, IMRO exerted pressure on Muslim landlords, obliging them to sell land to peasants at lower prices than the peasants would have otherwise offered. IMRO also set wage standards for farm labour.⁷² The organization was quick to use intimidation and assassination against rival organizations. IMRO came into more conflict with the Greeks in the late 1890s as it tried to expand its membership in the late 1890s to include Vlachs and *Grecomans*.⁷³ Priests and teachers from rival movements were told to yield or face assassination. IMRO was keen to drive away or eliminate *Grecoman* teachers loyal to the Patriarchate that worked in Slavic speaking villages so its teachers would be free to fill the vacuum.⁷⁴ While IMRO had democratic functions and preached social justice, it used strict measures against its own members and those it controlled.⁷⁵ Leaders of the ten person cells were supposed to know their group members very well, monitoring behaviour and interactions. In effect, IMRO strove to create a shadow government and administration. Importantly, people were not to use the Ottoman courts.⁷⁶ It was first necessary to educate the people to achieve, what Delchev termed, the "revolution in

⁶⁹ Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy*, 79. IMRO's taxation often took the form of peasants having to give up money or livestock in return for a note of promise that they would be reimbursed after the revolution.

⁷⁰ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, 117.

⁷¹ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 75. Perry credits Delchev for opening links for IMRO between eastern Macedonia and Bulgaria.

⁷² Christ Anastasoff, *The Tragic Peninsula*, 46.

⁷³ *Grecomans* were Slavic speakers that remained loyal to the Patriarchate.

⁷⁴ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 126. Aarbakke notes that IMRO assassinated the *Grecoman* teacher of the village of Siderhorion in the Kastoria district in 1899/1900 in order to establish itself in the village. Intimidation and assassination helped drive IMRO's expansion in the Kastoria district in 1899-1901. By the time Karavangelis arrived in Kastoria, Hellenism's hold in the region had been reduced to the town of Kastoria itself with the Patriarchate's priests and teachers seeking refuge in the town.

⁷⁵ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 65. Members of IMRO committees were elected by secret ballot.

people's minds" necessary to prepare them mentally for the suffering of revolutionary warfare. As MacDermott explains, this is what differentiated IMRO from the Sofia-based Supremist organization, which advocated immediate revolt.⁷⁷

The relationship between the young teachers of IMRO and their peasant brethren was not without friction. Many IMRO men became "disgusted with the peasants because they were slow to rouse to revolution."⁷⁸ Those peasants that did not acquiesce to IMRO willingly were "made to understand."⁷⁹ There was little tolerance for acts of intransigence. With no prisons, IMRO dispensed justice in terms of monetary fines, physical punishment or execution. British parliamentary correspondent John Foster Fraser noted that most peasants helped the revolutionaries "not because they regard them as brothers, but because they are afraid of assassination if they do not help them."⁸⁰ Disclosure of information or "loose talk" about IMRO's activities would lead to a bullet being delivered to the suspect with the message: "We will use it unless you talk less."⁸¹ Punishment was often brutal and literal. A particularly grisly example is Fraser's account of a seventy-year-old woman who was suspected of informing the Ottoman authorities of Boris Sarafov's presence in a nearby village. For punishment, pieces of her feet were cut off and forced into her mouth until she choked to death.⁸² Incidents such as these became increasingly frequent as IMRO and its rivals resorted to terror and violence.

As with past revolutionary movements in the Balkans, IMRO incorporated bandits to serve as paramilitary forces. Bandits were already popular amongst the peasantry for occasionally dispensing justice and allowing peasants to share in their loot. IMRO could offer the bandits its support network and supplies of weapons in return for loyalty. Initially, the bandits proved difficult for the organization to control, but by the late 1890s some well-known bandits had come under IMRO's influence.⁸³

⁷⁶ Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 106.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Teresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair*, 113.

⁷⁹ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 113.

⁸⁰ John Foster Fraser, *Pictures of the Balkans* (London and Paris: Cassell, 1906), 179.

⁸¹ Leon Sciaky, *Farewell to Salonica: City at the Crossroads*, (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2003), 134.

⁸² John Foster Fraser, *Pictures of the Balkans*, 208. In this particular case, the woman was the sister of Greek priest who was presumably loyal was to the Greek cause. Nevertheless, this is a credible example of how external or internal enemies might be dealt with. As the Macedonian Struggle intensified, grotesque and depraved acts of violence against civilians and combatants were committed by all sides.

⁸³ Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy*, 79.

By incorporating the heroism of the bandits, the intellectuals of IMRO were able to build on their existing appeal to the peasants as wise educators. This arrangement helped IMRO build a collective consciousness in the minds of the peasants. Bandits also served as a police force to protect supply routes and enter villages to administer justice and eliminate spies and traitors. In time, several teachers joined the bands themselves. The incorporation of bandits gave IMRO the means to impose and enforce its phantom state. According to terrorism expert Roland Gaucher, IMRO pioneered a technique that would be used by resistance forces in occupied Europe during the Second World War, Vietnam and, more recently, Kosovo. This phantom state is maintained by:

Partisan forces which may occupy a town for a few days or for a few hours and then disappear before they can be caught; a hidden power that exists alongside the official power, that levies taxes and punishes those who do not obey its laws; accomplices within the administration who undermine the government apparatus; a political and administrative structure that permeates the entire population, maneuvers it to its own ends; peasants who help the guerrillas and afterwards hide their arms and once again become peaceful citizens; a country that supports the government by day and the rebels by night—all these situations and techniques are commonplace today. But the I.M.R.O. had already perfected such techniques as long ago as the turn of the century...⁸⁴

IMRO's guerrilla forces paid special attention to the condition of schools during "administrative" visits, making sure existing schools received adequate levels of local funding. Where no school existed, villagers were urged to build one so an IMRO teacher could be posted to it.⁸⁵

The Exarchate school system continued to service IMRO's expansion by providing the phantom state with a structure and network through which the organization could effectively govern. School buildings served as meeting halls, electoral polling stations and political assemblies for IMRO's many committees. The Central Committee itself often held many of its meetings in the chemistry laboratory of the Exarchate's gymnasium in Thessaloniki, where IMRO's founders had gone to school.⁸⁶ While accompanying an IMRO band across Macedonia, Albert Sonnichsen observed several IMRO functions taking place in schools, including legal proceedings. A classroom

⁸⁴ Roland Gaucher, *The Terrorists from Tsarist Russia to the O.A.S.* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1965), 156.

⁸⁵ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 210.

⁸⁶ Leon Sciaky, *Farewell to Salonica*, 118.

became a courtroom on a Saturday with a *voyvoda* (guerrilla leader) presiding over a property dispute between two men. A priest represented one party, a teacher the other.⁸⁷ Indeed, IMRO members managed to find an array of usages for schools. While Sonnichsen was in Bitola, there was a rumour that two “terrorists” had killed a man and buried the corpse in the basement of the gymnasium. The teachers at the school confirmed the story and left the body where it was.⁸⁸

By organizing through the schools, the teachers of IMRO were able to impose their will upon the Slavic peasants throughout much Macedonia by employing a mixture of inspiration and intimidation. They were able to transcend modern and traditional parameters by being both elegantly dressed Europeanized teachers and rough-and-ready mountain guerrillas in the apparel of the legendary bandits. IMRO leaders must have been aware of the symbolic appeal of this duality since several had themselves photographed in both guises. In the late 1890s guerrilla life became more commonplace for IMRO teachers as increasing numbers were dismissed from their teaching posts by Exarchate bishops for radicalism or incompetence. After the turn of the century, several guerrilla bands had former teachers in their ranks. At times a teacher from such a band might leave the guerrillas to resume teaching during an administrative visit to a village.⁸⁹

As a rule, IMRO preferred to have educated men leading its guerrilla bands who were “cut from the same cloth” as the teacher leaders. Bandit leaders offering their services had valuable experience, but they could be unreliable and were usually illiterate, making written communication difficult. The organization remedied this by giving illiterate leaders a secretary “to assist them with paperwork and to act as what later generations would call a ‘political commissar.’”⁹⁰ It is a testament to IMRO’s appeal, or its cunning, that it was able to attract bandits into its ranks. Sonnichsen was impressed by the presence of famed bandit “Apostol Petkov” in IMRO, especially since Petkov had to

⁸⁷ Albert Sonnichsen, *Confessions of a Macedonian Bandit* (New York: Duffield & Company, 1909), 171.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 211. This incident took place in the midst of the Macedonian Struggle. The deceased was a victim of a factional war being waged between rival groups within IMRO. Sonnichsen notes that these murders were publicly blamed on the Greeks.

⁸⁹ Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 115. MacDermott provides several accounts of Sandanski’s guerrillas performing administrative duties in the Pirin region in the winter of 1902-03.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

“bind himself to obey the commands of anemic schoolmasters in the towns.”⁹¹ Several foreign officials believed Petkov was the supreme leader of IMRO, but he was very much subordinate to the “anemic” teachers.⁹² Sonnichsen was reminded who made the important decisions in the organization when an IMRO “general” revealed himself later in Sonnichsen’s trip:

The hum of low conversation awakened me in the morning. Sitting up, I saw a man in a European dress talking to our host. He turned, observed that I was awake and advanced with his left hand extended; the right sleeve was empty, “Good morning, Bie Albert,” he greeted me, smiling. “You are Genreal Nogi,” I ventured. He laughed at my using the pseudonym with which he signed his official correspondence. “I am he,” he admitted, “also the local schoolmaster.” He was the secretary of the local committee, and as such had arranged our reception.⁹³

Arthur D. Howden Smith recounted a similar experience during his tour of Macedonia. When the guerrilla band he was travelling with stopped at a village, they were hosted by the local teacher, who was also the local coordinator.⁹⁴ Guerrilla bands were IMRO’s military and its police, but they took orders from the teacher-led committees, who effectively served as junior officers under the control of the various committees that led them.

At the village level, IMRO’s teachers served as local administrators and junior officers preparing for the eventual uprising. Peasants were drilled in the rudiments of guerrilla warfare and older students formed dynamic revolutionary cells. Schoolboys served as messengers and were sent on fundraising missions to rob the Ottoman postal service.⁹⁵ Sonnichsen recounted that the IMRO teachers of one school ordered a delegation of students to launch a protest to the Exarchate bishop for the removal of a teacher that was spying for the Exarchate. The student delegates had no success and were all expelled, leaving the student leader unable to complete his diploma that would have

⁹¹ Albert Sonnichsen, *Confessions of a Macedonian Bandit*, 36-38. Sonnichsen notes a prejudice the younger leaders (presumably teachers) had for “that old brigand” Petkov since he “found it hard to keep up with the evolutionary movements of the organization.”

⁹² Christ Anastasoff, *The Tragic Peninsula*, 19; Albert Sonnichsen, *Confessions of a Macedonian Bandit*, 38.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁹⁴ Arthur H.D. Smith, *Fighting the Turk in the Balkans: An American’s Adventures with the Macedonian Revolutionaries* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1908), 238.

⁹⁵ Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy*, 79.

qualified him to teach the following year. The student left the school and duly joined the guerrillas in the hills.⁹⁶

As IMRO grew and violence escalated, the organization lost most of its secretive qualities. The Ottoman authorities increasingly focused on raiding schools and confiscating revolutionary books. The authorities scrutinized teachers and many had to take to the hills, or Bulgaria, in growing numbers. IMRO began to welcome more women into its ranks. Female teachers led the way, taking on critical roles and proving to be just as effective as their male colleagues. For example, a committee of female teachers formed in Skopje in 1900, led in part by Delchev's love interest, Yanka Kanevcheva. The female committee members worked tirelessly for IMRO, teaching by day, sheltering guerrillas and couriering messages by night and making bombs in their spare time.⁹⁷ In villages, female teachers organized peasant women into committees to run supplies to guerrilla forces, and serve as couriers and look outs.⁹⁸ Some became guerrilla fighters,⁹⁹ others served as nurses and doctors.¹⁰⁰ Women's committees sometimes engaged in group protests. A women's committee near Kastoria mobilized to block the path of an Ottoman force that had arrested most of the men in their village. They remained in place until the commanding officer relented and released many of the men. Delegations of women journeyed to towns to protest the detention of prisoners to the authorities and the foreign consuls.¹⁰¹ Women helped keep IMRO functioning and expanding. By the turn of the century, the work of a few teachers had developed into a widespread organization that appeared close to launching a mass uprising. It remained to be seen whether IMRO had the wherewithal to revolt successfully.

⁹⁶ Albert Sonnichsen, *Confessions of a Macedonian Bandit*, 41-42.

⁹⁷ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 258. In earlier times, IMRO members had almost all been men who were urged not to tell their wives of revolutionary activities.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁹⁹ Alfred Greenwood Hale, *My Life of Adventure* (London, New York and Toronto: Hodder and Stroughton, 1918), 215-216. Hale accompanied a large guerrilla band with a dozen women in its ranks. Hale considered the women to be amongst the unit's bravest fighters. "They fought like devils and were merciless." Frederick Moore also notes the presence of women amongst the guerrilla forces. Arthur D.H. Smith's book contains a portrait of 'A woman insurgent chief.'

¹⁰⁰ Arthur H.D. Smith, *Fighting the Turk in the Balkans*, 309. Smith met a woman doctor in north-eastern Macedonia working for IMRO. She had studied medicine and had returned to her native Macedonia after her husband, a village schoolteacher, and her father had been killed on suspicion of spreading propaganda.

¹⁰¹ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 211.

IMRO's leaders did a credible job of creating a phantom state in Macedonia, but the organization unquestionably benefited from several circumstances that were beyond its control. Foremost was the expansion of the Exarchate schools in the 1890s. IMRO's timing was fortunate as it was able to benefit from the diplomacy of Stephen Stambolov. After Stambolov was deposed and assassinated, his successor, Konstantin Stoilov, relaxed restrictions on Macedonian activities, easing pressure on IMRO's supply routes. For its part, the Exarchate continued to subsidize IMRO by knowingly employing IMRO members as teachers and inspectors in its schools. While the relationship was strained at times to the point of violence, IMRO and the Exarchate could not afford to diverge completely. IMRO needed the Exarchate's resources and school system and the Exarchate benefited from the security IMRO offered against their many common enemies. The accession of Delchev's old classmate, Boris Sarafov, to the leadership of the Supremist Committee in 1899 greatly improved the relationship between the two organizations.

The economic and security situation in Macedonia also worked to IMRO's favour as the quality of life of the peasants continued to deteriorate. A series of bad harvests occurred across the southern Balkans in the late 1890s that coincided with a global cereal glut. The result was lower prices for lower yields.¹⁰² The Great Powers added to the austerity by having companies collect taxes directly in Ottoman territory to service the Sultan's overwhelming foreign debt. As Misha Glenny comments, "The Age of Imperialism turned Salonika into a great city, but it condemned the three vilayets of Macedonia to a terrible future."¹⁰³ Brailsford estimated that the average peasant household in Macedonia was subject to pay 60% of its income in taxes in return for little or no service from the Ottoman state.¹⁰⁴ In addition, the internal security situation continued to leave villagers in a state of paralyzing fear, particularly those in north-western Macedonia that were prey to Albanian bandits who levied fees of their own.¹⁰⁵ These factors considered, it is understandable why some welcomed IMRO's presence. The organization offered education, economic and social justice backed up by armed

¹⁰² Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers, 1804-1999* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2000), 184.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, 52.

force and a message of hope and liberation. Through its hard work and the favourable circumstances IMRO became a considerable force by 1900, but a multitude of challenges lay ahead.

Passage to Ilinden

In 1901, relations between IMRO and the Supremists in Sofia became strained. Supremist leader Boris Sarafov was a credible fundraiser and publicist for the Macedonian cause, but his exploits in European capitals and spendthrift tendencies were viewed critically by the comparatively pious and parsimonious teachers of IMRO.¹⁰⁶ Sarafov ran afoul of the other Supremists and the Bulgarian government by ordering the assassination of a Romanian journalist whose criticism displeased him.¹⁰⁷ After some intrigue, the military hardliners in the Supremist Organization pushed Sarafov aside and former Bulgarian General Ivan Tsonchev assumed the Supremist leadership.

IMRO and Tsonchev were soon at loggerheads. Like General Nikolaev before him, Tsonchev did not believe a peasant force led by teachers was capable of carrying out a successful revolution. The general demanded subordination from IMRO and called for a coordinated uprising. When Petrov and Delchev refused, the general had the two men arrested and took control of IMRO's treasury, weapon stores and its Sofia newspaper.¹⁰⁸ Sarafov argued for the general's assassination, but Delchev forbade such action. Although Delchev and Petrov got word out to committee leaders to decentralize and resist the Supremists, the appearance was that Tsonchev was in total control.¹⁰⁹ To make matters worse for IMRO, Tsonchev's coup in mid 1901 coincided with mass arrests of IMRO members in Thessaloniki, including most of the Central Committee. Power fell to

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 47.

¹⁰⁶ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 216. Although Sarafov came from the same rather humble beginnings as the IMRO teachers, he had flourished in the Bulgarian military and enjoyed the life of a politician and diplomat. Sarafov came up with several imaginative fundraising schemes. He was able to secure 50,000 francs by romancing a rich Englishman's daughter. He tendered a mercenary force of Macedonians to the United States for money during the Spanish American war and offered a London bank the right to exploit Lake Ohrid after liberation for a modest cash advance. Sarafov also discussed opening Uniate churches in an effort to court the Vatican.

¹⁰⁷ Christ Anastasoff, *The Tragic Peninsula*, 60.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 63-64. Tsonchev did not disguise his wish to see Macedonia incorporated into a greater Bulgaria.

¹⁰⁹ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 254 and Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 98.

former Revolutionary Brotherhood leader Ivan Garvanov.¹¹⁰ In the autumn of 1901, most of IMRO's leadership was in jail or in hiding. Desperate measures were necessary.

In September of 1901 IMRO executed a plan that would give it much needed funds and more international publicity than Boris Sarafov could have provided in a lifetime of cavorting in foreign capitals. The leader of the plot was Yane Sandanski, one of the few prominent IMRO men to escape arrest. While not a teacher by profession, Sandanski was self educated and well associated with reading rooms, socialism and inspirational cultural activities. Although originally a member of a Supremist band, Sandanski had been charmed into joining IMRO by Delchev when the two met in 1899.¹¹¹ Desperately searching for a way to fill IMRO's depleted coffers, Sandanski and others in the border region looked for people to kidnap. Sava Mikhailov, a teacher and chairman of the IMRO committee in Dzhumaia, (Blagoevgrad) suggested kidnapping an American missionary since they assumed the missionaries were rich.¹¹²

Sandanski and his men set their sights on Miss Ellen Stone, a long-time American missionary schoolteacher in Bulgaria and Macedonia. In the late summer of 1901, Stone was in nearby Bansko running a training course for Protestant primary teachers and "Bible women."¹¹³ Delchev's organizational work of some five years earlier paid off as Bansko's Protestants provided critical intelligence, placing their loyalty to IMRO before their church. Clumsily disguised as Ottoman soldiers, the kidnapers intercepted the missionaries on their journey out of the town. They whisked Miss Stone and her assistant, Katerina Tsilka, away into the highlands and began negotiations. The kidnapping drama put the Macedonian cause in the western newspapers and sent President Roosevelt and his staff into a quandary. The kidnapers and their hostages traipsed through the Pirin Mountains for over five months, with Tsilka giving birth to a baby girl en route. Eventually, the Ottomans paid a substantial ransom; enabling IMRO to procure badly needed rifles and ammunition. Stone and Tsilka later toured the United States, preaching liberation for Macedonia.

¹¹⁰ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 98.

¹¹¹ Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 42-43. Sandanski was born in a village in the Pirin Mountains. His family fled to Dupnitsa in the Bulgarian Principality after the reestablishment of Ottoman rule.

¹¹² Teresa Carpenter, *The Miss Stone Affair*, 117. Mikhailov was a graduate of the American Mission's boy's school in Samokov.

The kidnapping affair benefited IMRO and proved the organization's durability. The networks of the phantom state ensured quick communications with IMRO committees and the negotiating parties. Furthermore, the kidnapers and the kidnapped were cared for and alerted of any impending danger as they traversed the rugged terrain while being chased by Ottoman troops and Supremist bands. The rift between the Supremists and IMRO widened in 1902. Armed clashes occurred between the two organizations as far west as the Kastoria area. The most intense action was near the Bulgarian border. In the Petrich area, Supremists under the command of Doncho Zlatov cleared the way for Supremist propaganda by ridding the area of teachers and executing village headmen who would not pledge their village to the goals of the Supremists.¹¹⁴ In October of 1902, Tsonchev himself attempted to induce a mass uprising by leading a force of a few hundred men into Eastern Macedonia. According to Duncan Perry:

It is likely that Tsonchev intended to attempt a takeover of the grass-roots [I]MRO committees, not by force, but by demonstrating through the use of his chetas, that professional military leaders in Macedonia were much more effective than schoolteachers.¹¹⁵

However, few in Macedonia rallied to Tsonchev's ranks. Most villages remained loyal to IMRO. The organization's forces disarmed or fought the invading Supremists. After their enemies had finished fighting each other, the Ottoman forces moved in and sacked the area. IMRO prevented the Supremists from provoking a large uprising in 1902, but it would not be so successful the following year.

Conditions in Macedonia continued to worsen, creating impatience for the launch of the anticipated general uprising. More guerrilla bands placed demands on the peasants and frequent clashes with Ottoman troops meant added reprisals against the beleaguered population. Peasants in southeastern Macedonia threatened to go over to the Supremists if IMRO did not supply them with rifles.¹¹⁶ Students were a problem, too. Just as the founders of IMRO had grown impatient with the status quo during their student years, the teachers were confronted with a new generation of students who did not want to quietly

¹¹³ Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 72.

¹¹⁴ Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy*, 84; Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 95. Zlatov and his band had led the Supremist pursuit of Sandanski and the kidnapers.

¹¹⁵ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 117.

¹¹⁶ Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 103.

teach and prepare the population for a future revolution. Hristiso Silyanov, one of Gruev's students in Bitola, expressed frustration at his teacher's urging of patience:

We were annoyed with Gruev for advising us to get our school-leaving certificate just in case. He argued that in this way we could more easily get teaching posts and serve the cause. We argued that with or without a certificate, the Organization would be able to force the Exarchate and the communes to find us all some kind of teaching post, and we convinced ourselves.¹¹⁷

Student belligerence was widespread. Brailsford noticed pupils from the Exarchate's Gymnasium in Skopje taunting Ottoman soldiers.¹¹⁸ But it was a group of students in Thessaloniki who made the most noise.

Originally known as the "Troublemakers," this circle of students and teachers began operating on the fringes of IMRO during 1898 in Thessaloniki. The sons of wealthy Veles families, they became dedicated to terrorism after befriending Svetoslav Merdzhanov, a student who had just returned from studies in Geneva. Merdzhanov had moved in nihilist circles during his time abroad, and he exposed the young radicals to nihilist literature and renamed the group the "Boatmen." Just as liberalism and socialism had inspired Gruev, Delchev and Sandanski, these young men were influenced by the latest in European radicalism. In order to goad the Great Powers into addressing reforms in Macedonia, they concluded that they should attack foreign interests in the city.¹¹⁹ As Stoyan Christowe comments, the Boatmen "would either reach shore successfully or wreck their boat and themselves against the rocks. They did the latter."¹²⁰

In 1900, the Boatmen rented a barbershop in Thessaloniki and began digging a tunnel under the Ottoman Bank. Perpetually desperate for money, they resorted to stealing jewellery from their families and kidnapping one another for ransom. Garvanov disapproved of their actions, but Delchev aided them by assisting in the bogus hostage negotiations.¹²¹ Slowly, they began procuring dynamite. In April of 1903, they told their IMRO mentors to leave town and took action. They first bombed a French steamer,

¹¹⁷ Hristo Silyanov, *Pisma i izpovedi na edin chetnik*, 41-43, quoted in Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 181.

¹¹⁸ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia Its Races and Their Future*, 117.

¹¹⁹ Roland Gaucher, *The Terrorists*, 164.

¹²⁰ Stoyan Christowe, *Heroes and Assassins*, 79. Christowe has a detailed description of the Boatmen and the events of April, 1903. He interviewed one of the few surviving Boatmen, Alexander Kiprov, in 1927.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 80. Delchev urged the Boatmen to be patient, but assisted them anyway. This was likely to gain leverage against Garvanov.

hoping to shock France into pushing its ally Russia to intervene. The next day, the group blew up the Ottoman Bank, bombed the gasworks, and scurried around the city tossing bombs into cafes and public buildings. As they had planned, most of the Boatmen died by their own hands or in gun battles with the authorities. In the aftermath, Slavs in the city were the victims of mob violence. Far from winning outside support, the reaction from the Great Powers was one of shock and disgust.¹²² IMRO found itself under more pressure, but it had already planned a course of action.

In January of 1903, IMRO's Central Committee agreed to revolt in the spring. The fateful meeting was held in the chemistry laboratory of the Exarchate gymnasium in Thessaloniki on the initiative of Ivan Garvanov, the acting Central Committee leader. Garvanov informed the delegates that the Ottomans had obtained Supremist papers regarding a planned revolt for 1903 and warned that repression was imminent. It appears those present became convinced that revolt and reprisals would provoke enough outrage to merit Great Power intervention for Macedonian autonomy.¹²³ While this would cynically sacrifice many of IMRO's constituents, they hoped it would spell an end to Ottoman tyranny, as had been the case in Bulgaria in the 1870s. However, there was no international support for this action. As Duncan Perry persuasively argues, Garvanov likely knew this and urged for an uprising for the express sake of destroying the very organization he led, but, evidently, still despised.¹²⁴

In the coming months, other members of the Central Committee expressed disapproval of the planned uprising, but felt bound to uphold the decision of their governing body. Delchev and Sandanski believed the population was not materially or psychologically ready to revolt and that such action would lead to the division of Macedonia between Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece.¹²⁵ Dr. Tatarchev and Hristo Matov supported the call to arms. Gruev, who was released from prison in March of 1903, felt it

¹²² Ibid., 111.

¹²³ Duncan Perry, "Ivan Garvanov: Architect of Ilinden," in *East European Quarterly*, Vol XIX, No. 4 January (1986): 409-410. The delegates may have been falsely promised that Bulgarian and Russian aid would be forthcoming.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 411. Perry also notes that Garvanov may have hand picked the delegates. Garvanov's likely objective was to see IMRO weakened to the point where what was left of the organization would be forced into the Supremist fold.

¹²⁵ Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 121.

was too late for the preparations to be halted.¹²⁶ Just prior to Easter, a meeting in Thessaloniki between Gruev, Delchev and Garvanov produced a compromise agreement to limit the general rising to the Bitola region with guerrilla raids elsewhere. The launch date of the uprising was also postponed until St. Elijah's Day (*Ilin Den*) to allow for more of the harvest to be gathered. Warned by the Boatmen of the impending detonations, Gruev left for his native Smilevo to prepare for the uprising. Delchev headed east with his guerrilla band. Whether by coincidence or malice, Delchev and his men found themselves surrounded by a superior Ottoman force on May 4, 1903. In the ensuing battle, Delchev was killed. Gruev and Delchev were likely the only members who had enough respect and political clout to call off the uprising. Despite having full knowledge of the impending terrorism in Thessaloniki, Garvanov remained in the city and was arrested. With Gruev committed to the plan and Delchev dead, Garvanov could watch events unfold from the relative safety of jail.¹²⁷

Quietly and efficiently, preparations in the Bitola area went ahead. As IMRO's strongest and most well prepared region, it was a good choice for a general uprising. The geography was ideal for defensive warfare and Bitola was far enough from the Bulgarian frontier to allay Great Power suspicion of Bulgarian orchestrations. Frederick Moore suspected that the organizers of the uprising knew their actions would induce reprisals against all Christians and thereby produce Greek victims and attract more outside attention.¹²⁸ Brailsford thought that the uprising would demonstrate that IMRO ruled the countryside of the territory, not the Greeks.¹²⁹ On August 2, 1903, burning haystacks announced the commencement of the uprising.

The rebels enjoyed initial success, taking control of most of the countryside in the region, including the town of Krushevo north of Bitola. Under the leadership of Nikola Karev, a teacher of socialist persuasion from a nearby village, the "Krushevo Republic" was declared with an appointed multiethnic government meeting in the town's Greek school.¹³⁰ In defiance of the orders of Karev and IMRO's revolutionary council in

¹²⁶ Ibid., 126.

¹²⁷ Duncan Perry, "Ivan Garvanov: Architect of Ilinden," 411.

¹²⁸ Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail*, 251-252.

¹²⁹ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, 148.

¹³⁰ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 376. The Bulgarian school was converted into a hospital. The Ottoman government building had been burnt during the fighting.

Smilevo, sectarian violence soon broke out in rebel-controlled areas as Slavic peasants exacted revenge on Muslim landlords and gangs raided and plundered the homes of Muslims and those loyal to the Greek Patriarchate. Despite official declarations of revolutionary brotherhood, the Ilinden Uprising was predominantly Slavic with some Vlach involvement.¹³¹ The “Krushevo Republic” lasted for ten days before Ottoman forces advanced with superior numbers and firepower and recaptured the town. Resistance continued into the autumn, but IMRO faced an increasingly hopeless struggle against superior forces. No outside help arrived. Some 200 villages were razed to the ground and local Muslim paramilitaries (*bashibazouks*) plundered at will. Some 50,000 to 60,000 people were displaced with winter approaching. IMRO survived, but it never recovered and split into rival factions that devoted much of their energies to fighting each other.

Why did IMRO fail militarily? Duncan Perry argues that because the forces were led by teachers the revolt was doomed from the start:

In any case, [I]MRO leaders were teachers—intellectuals—imbued with an idealism and a military program born out of naïveté. That peasants would not join them as they prepared to liberate their homeland was disappointing, but [I]MRO recruiters persisted.¹³²

Indeed, while IMRO fielded some 27,000 fighters, significant numbers of Slavic peasants in the Bitola area remained indifferent or took the opportunity to reap personal benefit from the uprising.¹³³ As Petrov, Delchev and Sandanski correctly anticipated, the peasants lacked the training and discipline necessary to endure a revolutionary war.¹³⁴ They were also deficient in weaponry. Perry contends that closer relations with the Bulgarian military might have improved guerrilla performance.¹³⁵ But the sheer numerical disadvantage would have strained even a seasoned guerrilla force. Perhaps, if IMRO had had a few more years to organize, a more widespread uprising might have met

¹³¹ Christ Anastasoff, *The Tragic Peninsula*, 89-90. Stories exist of Greeks, Albanians and Muslims aiding the rebels, but cooperation from outside Slavic and Vlach ranks was minimal. Members of the Supremist Organization and native Bulgarians took part in the fighting. Sectarian strife continued in rebel held areas, including Krushevo. See: Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*.

¹³² Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 87-88.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹³⁴ Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908*, 133. Many of the peasants that took part in the fighting lacked proper training and weapons and broke ranks under fire.

with better results. Nevertheless, IMRO's work in Macedonia became increasingly difficult. By 1903, they were no longer an invisible force. Even before the bombing spectacles of the "Boatmen," the Ottoman authorities were exerting more pressure on IMRO, and the organization faced an increasingly formidable challenge from the Greeks, who had adopted IMRO's methods and were targeting Exarchate schools. Open warfare was coming to Macedonia whether IMRO initiated it or not.

IMRO's teacher leaders demonstrated particular naïveté in their internal politics and their dealings with the Bulgarian government. Their reconciliation with Garvanov was unnecessary since the Revolutionary Brotherhood posed no threat to IMRO. Pragmatic action could have prevented Tsonchev's control of the Supremist organization in 1901.¹³⁶ But the teachers were notoriously forgiving; traitors on all levels were given second chances with some disastrous results.¹³⁷ Failure to recognize that minimal assistance, let alone armed intervention, would not be coming from Bulgaria should have been obvious. The Russians wanted status quo in the Balkans and were angered by Prince Ferdinand's support of the Supremist incursions. In order to appease Russia, the Bulgarian government dissolved all Macedonian organizations in the Bulgarian Principality in February of 1903.¹³⁸ During the spring and summer, the Bulgarian authorities took action against the Supremists and IMRO, announcing they would not support the uprising. IMRO interpreted this as a mere ploy, but it was not. As the uprising commenced, the Bulgarians closed the border and Prince Ferdinand departed for an extended trip abroad.¹³⁹

IMRO's leadership also misread the international political climate. Russia's attention was on the escalating crisis in the Far East. The Czar's Balkan partner, Austria-

¹³⁵ Duncan M. Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 87. Perry connects the lack of cooperation to the lack of Bulgarian consciousness amongst the leadership.

¹³⁶ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 254. This is not to simply suggest that IMRO should have ordered Tsonchev's assassination. Had Delchev and Petrov aligned their supporters with Sarafov's during the Supremist Committee's elections, Tsonchev would have lost the vote for leadership.

¹³⁷ This seems to be the result of the leadership's belief in the perfection of man. Sometimes, turncoats and enemies became loyal members of the organization, other times they did not. Garvanov is the most famous example, but there were others like 'Kote,' who, after several attempts at rehabilitation and forgiveness by Delchev, was thrown out of IMRO for his repeated intransigence. Kote was welcomed back into IMRO during the Ilinden Uprising on the recommendation of the guerrilla leader, Lazar Trikov. During the fighting, Kote killed Trikov and presented Trikov's head to Karavangelis and the Greeks in Kastoria. See: Merica MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 159.

¹³⁸ R.J. Crampton, *A Concise History of Bulgaria*, 130-131.

Hungary, and his ally, France, were all in agreement to avoid Balkan entanglements. Germany was aiding the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain was isolated and recovering from the Boer War. IMRO hoped press coverage and public outcry would prompt diplomatic pressure for Macedonian autonomy. British press coverage and the pleas of William Gladstone had roused world opinion to the “Bulgarian Horrors” of 1876, but times had changed. Before his death in 1898, Gladstone asked: “Why not Macedonia for the Macedonians?” But this question and the pleas of his son, Herbert Gladstone, could not sway the policymakers in the British government who did not wish to be drawn into a repeat of 1878.¹⁴⁰ The British press had often reacted with cynicism to reports of atrocities in Macedonia in the years since the Treaty of Berlin. The following report was published in December of 1884 in reaction to reports of atrocities and an open letter to Gladstone calling for intervention:

Some of the foreign newspapers, and particularly the Russian organs, have of late published sensational accounts of disorders in Macedonia, highly coloured with stories of Turkish cruelties committed on the Bulgarians in that region. Well-authenticated reports from Macedonia, however, give a direct contradiction to these rumours, which are said to be purposely circulated by emissaries of Panslavist and Bulgarian secret committees. These agitators are declared to be intriguing to bring about an agitation similar to that preceding the Bulgarian disorders: which were followed by war, and resulted in so much anxious work for European diplomacy.¹⁴¹

This report reflects the British government’s determination not to be pushed to the brink of world war by the actions of Balkan rebels some nineteen years before the Ilinden Uprising. Written appeals to Gladstone “requesting him to raise his mighty voice in favour of the Macedonian population”¹⁴² were customarily dismissed as exercises in tiresome rhetoric by the British government and press.¹⁴³

Much to the dismay of the teachers, the British government maintained its policy during the Ilinden Uprising, allowing the Ottomans to crush the rebellion. In vain, Matov and Tatarchev appealed for European intervention as “the only means of remedying the

¹³⁹ Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy*, 99.

¹⁴⁰ Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 156. Much like his father in 1878, Herbert Gladstone—M.P. for West Leeds in 1903—publicly supported Christian populations that revolted against the Ottoman Empire.

¹⁴¹ *London Times*, “The State of Macedonia,” December 16, 1884, p.3.

¹⁴² *London Times*, “The Macedonian Movement,” August 12, 1895, p.5.

¹⁴³ Similar reports appeared in the *London Times* in 1884, 1895 and 1898.

evil and stopping bloodshed.”¹⁴⁴ However, the published appeal was preceded in the same issue of the *New York Times* by statements by British Prime Minister James Balfour on the “...extraordinary complicated task.”¹⁴⁵ He added that “...the balance of criminality lay rather with the revolutionaries than with the Turks.”¹⁴⁶ Balfour accused the revolutionaries (IMRO) of trying to provoke intervention and finished by saying he “...did not desire to see such a policy succeed.”¹⁴⁷

Mounting public pressure on the British government secured food aid for the victims and new reform initiatives, but no autonomy for Macedonia. While sympathy for the victims was widespread, sympathy for IMRO was limited as many, like Frederick Moore, saw the resulting suffering as a deliberate calculation by the rebels:

The high chiefs of the committee never expected to defeat the Turks with their inadequate force of untrained peasants; their purpose was to provoke the Sultan to use his soldiers upon the Christians. They were willing to pay the lives of many thousand of their fellow Macedonians for the accomplishment of their desire—the country’s autonomy. They were fanatics.¹⁴⁸

It appears no one in IMRO grasped that this strategy, or being open about it, was resulting in damaging press coverage. Two years later, the leadership was still unashamedly expressing its desire to provoke more horrors in order to bring about European intervention. When a revolutionary leader expressed plans to John Fraser, Fraser remarked that the result would be massacre. The leader stated:

“We know it, we know it” was the quick exclamation in reply. “We want a big massacre! It is the price we shall have to pay. We shall provoke the Turk into such a measure that Europe will—must—intervene.... That is the way by which Macedonia will get its liberation.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁴ *New York Times*, “An Appeal to the Powers. Delegates of Macedonian Committees Say Their Intervention Is the Only Means of Stopping Bloodshed,” August 11, 1903, p.3.

¹⁴⁵ *New York Times*, “Statement by Mr. Balfour: He Says the Macedonians Are More to Blame than the Turks,” August 11, 1903, p.3.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail*, 251.

¹⁴⁹ John Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans*, Fraser states that these are the words of a revolutionary well-known in England and America. Presumably, this was Brois Sarafov who, after Ilinden, joined and remained in IMRO’s Supremist right wing camp until he was assassinated in 1907.

As the traveller Henry DeWindt penned, after listening to a similar declaration in a Sofia café, “The opinion of the Great Powers on the question did not seem to occur to this nation of fire eaters.”¹⁵⁰

The Ilinden Uprising was a disaster from which IMRO never fully recovered. The organization split into left and right wing camps, with the Supremists dominating the right and autonomists and socialists controlling the left. During the Macedonian Struggle, the two factions devoted considerable time and resources to fighting each other.¹⁵¹ Nonetheless, IMRO can be credited for bringing Macedonia to the attention of the world and helping to forge a distinctly Macedonian identity.

Who Were These Mustachioed Men? Macedonian Identity and the Politics of Difference

The national identity of IMRO’s leaders remains a matter of debate. Delchev, Gruev, Sandanski, Petrov and others became the fathers of the modern Macedonian nationalism of the Republic of Macedonia. At the same time, they remain heroes of Bulgarian history and serve as reminders to Bulgarian nationalists of the unredeemed boundaries of the Treaty of San Stefano. Schools, squares, streets and towns have been named after the revered leaders of IMRO in both Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia. Many documents from this period remain closely protected in respective national archives. Other very important documents that may reveal vital clues have disappeared. Questions remain and the debate continues.

The central issue is IMRO’s stated goal of autonomy for Macedonia. The leadership was certainly aware that political autonomy within the Ottoman Empire would only be temporary. Did they ultimately wish to see Macedonia become an independent state? Or were they just using autonomy to placate external fears of their true goal of joining Macedonia to Bulgaria as had been the case with Eastern Rumelia? Again, the simplest answer might be, “Yes.”

¹⁵⁰ Harry DeWindt, *Through Savage Europe The Narrative of a Journey through the Balkan States and European Russia* (London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1907), 220.

¹⁵¹ Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* 57. According to Poulton, IMRO killed more ‘traitors’ within its own ranks than Greeks in the spring of 1908.

An examination of IMRO documents and statements by the leadership reveals several confusing and contradictory statements and facts. IMRO was “intrinsically an organization internal to Macedonia,”¹⁵² yet it kept close links to Bulgaria. IMRO’s five principles call upon members to work secretly and independently for the goal of political autonomy while seeking “moral” and “material” support from Bulgaria to do so.¹⁵³ This seems to indicate IMRO was inherently both Macedonian and Bulgarian in its outlook. This duality is often reflected in the works of observers and historians. For instance, Brailsford wrote: “The insurgent movement [IMRO] is a genuine Macedonian movement, prepared by Macedonians, led by Macedonians, and assisted by the passionate sympathy of the vast majority of the Slav population.”¹⁵⁴ Ostensibly, this is a clear indication that IMRO was uniquely Macedonian. Brailsford could have substituted “Bulgarian” for “Macedonian” and “Slav” if he considered the movement and the Slavic population to be truly Bulgarian. However, Brailsford entitled the chapter “The Bulgarian Movement” and used “Macedonian” and “Bulgarian” interchangeably throughout the chapter to refer to the ethnicity of the Slavs of Macedonia and the IMRO membership.

Records and accounts of the Ilinden Uprising and the short-lived “Krushevo Republic” do little to clarify matters.¹⁵⁵ For example, historians cannot agree on something as simple as what flag flew while IMRO held Krushevo. Aarbakke states: “The insurgents flew Bulgarian flags everywhere.”¹⁵⁶ Conversely, according to Mercia MacDermott, a “red banner” flew over the town.¹⁵⁷ Frederick Moore, the first Westerner to visit Krushevo after Ottoman forces had taken the town, accounted that “the insurgents placed red flags about the town.”¹⁵⁸ Considering the disagreement and the ambiguity over something as publicly visible as a flag, the task of accurately assessing the nationality of the people on the ground appears daunting. Hindsight has not brought clarity. Reflecting

¹⁵² Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 31.

¹⁵³ Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question 1893-1908*, 38.

¹⁵⁴ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia Its Races and Their Future*, 113.

¹⁵⁵ Some key documents such as the original ‘Krushevo Manifesto’ have never been found. See: Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, 203-206.

¹⁵⁶ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 113.

¹⁵⁷ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 377.

¹⁵⁸ Frederick Moore, *The Balkan Trail*, 266. Moore arrived after the fighting and could not have seen the flags flying himself.

on his research into the past of Krushevo, Keith Brown writes of the difficulty of negotiating the “Plethora of Facts” about the days of the Ilinden Uprising:

As I have read, listened and reflected further, I have grown less certain of the course and meaning of the events of 1903, and more aware of the great, unmasterable mountain of data that exists. Its contours change each day....The changing political and economic circumstances of the Republic of Macedonia only compound the problem, as concerns over the future drive people to trawl the past for proof of status, or lessons that suit their needs in the present.¹⁵⁹

Within this “plethora of facts” and conflicting histories laypersons and professional historians alike can find the information history necessary to support their assumptions. What then can one conclude about the identity of the IMRO leadership given this array of information and the contradictory statements concerning the organization’s national identity?

Although it goes against the essentialism of nationalism, it is perhaps most accurate to consider IMRO as both a Bulgarian and a Macedonian organization. The leaders of IMRO were raised in the two currents of Bulgarian and emergent Macedonian nationalism. It was natural and expedient for them to express both national identities. Therefore, contradictory statements about the national orientation of IMRO, while confusing, are, in fact, accurate. During their formative years, the future teachers were exposed to the irredentism of Bulgarian nationalism in the Exarchate’s schools and churches. They had genuine fondness for Bulgaria. The young men who formed IMRO drew inspiration from Levski and the Bulgarian revolutionaries in 1876, and most of them chose to continue their education in Bulgaria. Concurrently, the young men were influenced by the distinctly Macedonian sentiments expressed by intellectuals in post-1878 Macedonia. The appeal of these sentiments was that they came from people, like IMRO’s founders, who were raised in the turmoil of Ottoman Macedonia, not in the relative freedom of the Bulgarian Principality. Those born in Macedonia could attend Exarchate schools, but they still lived in the realities of the Ottoman Empire. The generation of young men who formed IMRO had lived this separateness and their experiences shaped their worldview. Nationalist intellectuals and rebellious youngsters came together in the Exarchate’s schools, turning the institutions into hotbeds of dissent.

¹⁵⁹ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, 11.

In 1888, Stojan Novakovic reported that Macedonian nationalist aspirations were being aroused in the ranks of the Bulgarian schools much in the way the Ukrainians reacted to Russification.¹⁶⁰ Such aspirations were further stimulated for those continuing their education in Bulgaria.

For Delchev, Gruev and many of their fellow Macedonian-born students, life in Bulgaria was alienating. This feeling would have extended beyond mere reaction to the policies of Stephen Stambolov. The relative freedom and bourgeois affluence of Sofia contrasted starkly with the fear and austerity of life in Macedonia. The young students were confronted with a place that did not meet their expectations. In addition to seeing Macedonian societies closed and activists jailed, the Macedonians were treated as poor cousins by many native Bulgarians. According to Anne Norton in *Reflections on Political Identity*:

Meaning is made out of difference. Definition begins in negation, in the designation of what a thing is not...Confrontation with difference presents a challenge to the existing order, a question. It obliges one to think again.¹⁶¹

And think again the young men did. Disappointed and disillusioned with Bulgaria, Gruev, Matov, Delchev and others returned to their native Macedonia to teach and try to organize a revolutionary movement. A uniquely Macedonian experience produced a uniquely Macedonian identity.

In founding IMRO in 1893, the teachers defined themselves and their vision as distinct from Bulgaria. There was no statement calling for eventual union with Bulgaria. According to Joseph Swire, Gruev resolved to work against Bulgarian annexation, "knowing Bulgarian domination would never appeal to non-Slav Macedonians, nor many Slavs themselves."¹⁶² The political events of the next decade continued to contribute to separatist sentiments in Macedonia. The Supremists and the Revolutionary Brotherhood were established in reaction to IMRO and both had a largely adversarial relationship with the indigenous Macedonian organization. Differences in ideology and tactics contributed to the schism. Despite an easing of restrictions on Macedonian societies following the

¹⁶⁰ Blazhe Koneski, "Macedonian," 60.

¹⁶¹ Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity*, (London and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 3.

¹⁶² Joseph Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy*, 74, Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror*, 42. Dr. Tatarchev later claimed that union with Bulgarian was a proclaimed objective, although it was not at the time.

ousting of Stambolov, relations between the Bulgarian government and IMRO remained uneasy as both coveted the same territory.

Many Bulgarian citizens tired of the Macedonian cause. By the turn of the century, the bitter sentiment produced by the Treaty of Berlin was fading for those who resided within the boundaries of the principality. The actions of “well-educated” Macedonian assassins,¹⁶³ which included the assassination of the Minister of Public Instruction in 1902, and “fundraising” campaigns by their compatriots were contributing to a growing weariness with the Macedonian cause in Bulgaria.¹⁶⁴ The Bulgarian government’s annoyance with IMRO grew as they were less able to influence IMRO and came under international pressure to account for the assassinations, kidnappings and acts of terror IMRO perpetrated. The Bulgarians considered themselves superior and believed IMRO should heel to their authority. The attitudes of the Supremist military leaders reflected this as did the administration of the Exarchate. The Exarchate gave preference to hiring Bulgarian-born teachers, like Ivan Garvanov, to work in Macedonia and paid them more than their Macedonian-born colleagues.¹⁶⁵ A generation of defacto independence had produced a noticeable difference. Journalist Reginald Wyon observed this when he met “polished” Bulgarian officers who had learned English at Robert College in Constantinople: “Their fathers were rude peasants, like the Macedonians of today, as a diplomat once laughingly told me.”¹⁶⁶ As with the Macedonians, “confrontation with difference” had led Bulgarians to define themselves as distinct from the Macedonians.

For their part, many in IMRO and Macedonian intellectual circles were choosing to openly define themselves distinctly as Macedonians in opposition to the Bulgarians. In a 1901 interview with a *London Times* correspondent, Boris Sarafov took pains to distance Macedonians from Bulgaria:

It is a grievous error to suppose that we seek to acquire Macedonia on behalf of Bulgaria. We Macedonians consider ourselves to be an entirely separate national element, and we are not in the least disposed to allow our country to be seized by

¹⁶³ *London Times*, “The Macedonian Agitation,” October 23, 1900, p.6.

¹⁶⁴ *London Times*, “Murder of a Bulgarian Minister,” February 8, 1902, p.7.

¹⁶⁵ Vemund Aarbakke, *Ethnic Rivalry and the Quest for Macedonia*, 102-103.

¹⁶⁶ Reginald Wyon, *The Balkans from Within* (London: James Finch & Co., 1904), 168.

Bulgaria, Servia, or Greece. We will, in fact, oppose any such incorporation with all our might. Macedonia must belong to the Macedonians.¹⁶⁷

Mistrust of Bulgarians extended to IMRO leaders based in the Bulgarian Principality. When based in Dupnitsa, Bulgaria, Sandanski wrote to guerrilla leader Andon Yanev, urging him not to kill so many rival priests and teachers. Yanev replied: "Yane, I received your letter, but I do not accept advice from people outside Macedonia."¹⁶⁸ Brailsford also commented on the growing suspicion of Bulgaria amongst IMRO members:

Indeed, there is a strong current of opinion among the leaders of the Macedonian movement which tends to be critical of, and occasionally hostile to, Bulgaria. The younger generation of educated Macedonian Bulgars is profoundly distrustful of Russia, whose ambition it dreads more than the decaying power of Turkey. These men can never feel quite sure of Bulgaria, where sentiment and intrigue and the proximity of the Black Sea fleet make Russian influence powerful.¹⁶⁹

Brailsford's observation illustrates the growing schism between the Macedonians and Bulgaria being sustained by divergent political experiences. While their fathers and grandfathers may have hoped for Russian or Bulgarian intervention to liberate them from Ottoman rule, the new generations distrusted outsiders and were determined to free themselves on their own terms. This was sentiment born out of different experience.

For a comparison, it is worth returning to Kaplan's likening of the Macedonians to the Palestinians. The Palestinian experience is another example of the development of a separate identity being forged through experience. In 1900, there was little to distinguish Palestinians and Jordanians. Both populations spoke Arabic, and both were predominantly Sunni Muslim, but historical circumstances led to the development of separate identities. The establishment and expansion of the state of Israel between 1948 and 1967 left the Palestinians under Israeli rule or seeking refuge in Jordan. Mutual feelings were lost through different experiences. Like the Macedonians in Bulgaria, the Palestinians continued to endeavour to agitate in their homeland while asserting themselves politically in the country where they had sought refuge. In terms of ethnic, religious and linguistic distinctions, the two peoples had strong similarities. Nonetheless,

¹⁶⁷ *London Times*, "The Macedonian Agitation," April 12, 1901, p.5.

¹⁶⁸ *Memoirs of Andon Lazov Yanev (Kyoseto)*, Central State Archives, Sofia, f.771, op.1, a.e.102, pp. 43-45, quoted in Mercia MacDermott, *For Freedom and Perfection*, 65.

different experiences and aspirations produced conflict and the development of distinct identities. As with the Palestinians and Jordanians in 1970, political differences between the Macedonians and the Bulgarians deteriorated into violence in 1901. Difference became nationalized.

The Ilinden Uprising of 1903 marked the start of the armed Macedonian Struggle and served as the seminal moment for the Macedonian movement. No longer was IMRO a shadowy association engaging in acts of terror and guerrilla warfare. The hopeless defence of Krushevo was particularly symbolic as a mass “affirmation of loyalty” to a national identity by teachers, peasants and bandits, who demonstrated a “collective act of selflessness” by fighting and dying in open battle for the Krushevo Republic.¹⁷⁰

Macedonian literary circles were quick to seize on the tragic glory of the Ilinden Uprising as a pronouncement of Macedonian nationalism. Most notable was Kriste Misirkov’s book, *On the Macedonian Matters*, published in 1903. Misirkov, a teacher who had studied in Belgrade and St. Petersburg, made known his identity unambiguously:

I am Macedonian and this how I see the position of my country: it is not Russia or Austria-Hungary that are the enemies of Macedonia, but Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia. Our country can only be saved from ruin by struggling against these states.¹⁷¹

Misirkov identified the “central Macedonian dialect” of Veles, Prelip, Ohrid and Bitola as the language Macedonian intellectuals should speak. He advocated that this language be “...introduced as a compulsory subject in all religious and national teaching, even in the

¹⁶⁹ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia Its Races and their Future*, 121.

¹⁷⁰ Anne Norton, *Reflections on Political Identity*, 62. Norton gives the example of the Alamo where the Texan frontiersmen surrendered their individuality by opting to fight and thereby affirming their loyalty to the United States. The fact that they died in defeat ‘was a better sign than a victory—not only because it was the “supreme sacrifice,” but because it symbolized the dissolution of individuality and regional particularity in defense of American sovereignty.’ The events of the Ilinden Uprising served the same purpose and Krushevo became the Macedonian Alamo. Of great symbolism were the actions of the Vlach bandit Pitu Guli at Krushevo. While the Krushevo Republic’s President, the teacher Nikola Karev, fled the town to fight another day, Guli and his band of Vlach bandits took “Freedom or Death” literally and fought to the last man on a hill outside the town. The fact that a man who was a Vlach and a bandit knowingly sacrificed himself for Slav dominated IMRO has been used as an example of the widespread patriotic conviction of the uprising’s participants. However, there are several explanations as to why Guli opted to lead a fight to the last man. See: Keith Brown, *The Past in Question*, Chapter 8.

¹⁷¹ Kriste Petkov Misirkov, *On the Macedonian Matters*, (Skopje: Macedonian Review, 1974), 14, <http://faq.macedonia.org/the.arts/kpm.omm.pdf> (accessed September 5, 2005).

Turkish schools.”¹⁷² Misirkov extolled the heroism of the Ilinden fighters and claimed that the uprising failed because “...it took on a Bulgarian bias.”¹⁷³

While Misirkov was quick to differentiate Macedonians from Bulgarians, he acknowledged past connections: “...in the past we have even called ourselves Bulgarians.”¹⁷⁴ To Misirkov, the development of a Macedonian national identity was a “...perfectly normal historical process by which the Bulgarian, Croatian and Serbian peoples emerged from the South Slav group.”¹⁷⁵ Indeed, it was. As with other Balkan national movements, national feelings had been propagated through education, crystallizing in mass uprising. However, in the case of Macedonia, the uprising did not lead to outside intervention and an autonomous or independent Macedonian state. Misirkov could proclaim that a Macedonian language and people had come of age, but without a recognized state to legitimize it, Macedonian nationalism remained just one of the many nationalisms competing for the masses in the turmoil of the Macedonian Struggle.

There is evidence that some were choosing to define themselves as Macedonians. According to Ristovski, some 34 villages made written demands for education in the Macedonian language.¹⁷⁶ Brailsford noted that some (presumably the left wing of IMRO) believed that Macedonia should be “...a Slav, but not definitely a Bulgarian, country....”¹⁷⁷ He also included the following footnote on IMRO’s intent regarding the Exarchate schools:

The Committee, or some sections of it, even contemplates (1905) the policy of imposing the Macedonian Slav dialect in place of literary Bulgarian as the language of all the Exarchate Schools in Macedonia. Grammars are said to have been printed for this purpose. This seems to me to prove the sincerity of the local autonomist patriotism.¹⁷⁸

Although sceptical of this patriotism, Mary Edith Durham recorded: “I have met people who believe there is a special race which they call ‘Macedonian,’ whose ‘cause’ they

¹⁷² Ibid., 28.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 27.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 153.

¹⁷⁶ Blazhe Ristovski, *Macedonia and the Macedonian People*, 191.

¹⁷⁷ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia Its Races and their Future*, 124.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., footnote I.

wish to aid.”¹⁷⁹ In conversation with Albert Sonnichsen, Hristo Tcheropeev—one of Miss Stone’s kidnappers—likened Tsonchev and the pro-Bulgarian Supremists to a foreign entity: “Fancy a German admiral coming over to your United States and declaring himself your prime minister. You would either kick him out or laugh at him.”¹⁸⁰

Nevertheless, this distinctly Macedonian identity was far from being universally accepted amongst the Slavic masses or by IMRO’s leadership. Some would opt to define themselves, like Misirkov, as Macedonians, but the instability of the times led others back to the Bulgarian camp. Boris Sarafov was on IMRO’s executive during the Ilinden Uprising and claimed in 1901 that the Macedonians were “an entirely separate element...”¹⁸¹ But, after the Ilinden Uprising, he went back to the Supremists and became a leading figure in the pro-Bulgarian right wing of IMRO after 1903.¹⁸² Sarafov joined prominent IMRO member Hristo Matov and co-founder Dr. Tatarchev, who had both gone over to the Supremists prior to the uprising. Yane Sandanski, who had begun as a Supremist fighter and agitator, became leader of the autonomist left wing faction. It is curious, and perhaps fitting, that some of the leaders of the rival factions of IMRO in 1904 had begun their careers in rival camps.

Conclusion

IMRO was a product of the education race. Teachers in Bulgarian Exarchate schools had receptive students for their lessons on Bulgarian nationalism and irredentism in the often miserable and oppressive environment of post 1878 Ottoman Macedonia. For a generation of students that went abroad for further schooling in Bulgaria, Serbia and beyond, Ottoman rule in Macedonia was simply intolerable. Forming IMRO, the young teachers set out to overthrow their Ottoman masters on their own terms as Macedonians.

¹⁷⁹ Mary Edith Durham, *The Burden of the Balkans*, 76-77. Durham also made the following comment on the language in the Bitola area: “The truth is that the dialect of the Macedonian Slav is neither Servian or Bulgarian, but ‘betwixt and between.’”

¹⁸⁰ Albert Sonnichsen, *Confessions of a Macedonian Bandit*, 257.

¹⁸¹ *London Times*, “The Macedonian Agitation,” p.5, April 12, 1901.

¹⁸² Keith Brown, “Villains and Symbolic Pollution in the Narratives of Nations. The Case of Boris Sarafov,” in *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory*, ed. Maria Todorova, 247 (New York: New York University Press, 2004). Sarafov’s decision to return to the Bulgarian camp may have simply been because he “...saw greater advantage in collusion with Bulgaria...” However, as Brown notes, Sarafov has become the “genius-villain-scapegoat” in popular history of the failed uprising.

Yet, their rapid progress would have been impossible without the policies of the Bulgarian government and the Exarchate. As teachers, the nucleus of IMRO expanded its influence and its organizational network through the expanding Exarchate school system in Macedonia. The often strained relationship between IMRO and the Bulgarian institutions was, for the most part, mutually beneficial until 1901.

The chronicle of the development of IMRO is one of a nation evolving through education. The Exarchate schools provided the setting for study and inquiry for IMRO's founders as students, and the same schools gave the young men forums in which to propagate patriotism to future generations as teachers. By appealing to their peasant brethren as both modern, European revolutionaries and as traditional bandit heroes, IMRO was able to build enough of a mass following to launch the heroic, if ill-conceived, Ilinden Uprising against Ottoman rule in 1903. Although the rebels failed, their actions and the events of the uprising contributed to the realization of "local autonomist patriotism" that some defined as Macedonian nationalism. The legacy of IMRO and the Ilinden Uprising inspired the Slavic Macedonians who joined the ranks of SNOF (Slavo-Macedonian People's Front) and the Greek Communists during World War II and the Greek Civil War.¹⁸³ The teachers also became heroic figures in Bulgarian history and are seen as heroes, founding fathers and the moral conscience of the Republic of Macedonia.

¹⁸³ Iakovos D. Michailidis, "On the Other Side of the River: The Defeated Slavophones and Greek History," in *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference*, ed. Jane Cowan, 75 (Sterling Virginia: Pluto Press, 2000).

Conclusion and Analysis

The Ilinden Uprising and the subsequent Macedonian Struggle did not mark the end of the educational struggle for Macedonia. Teachers from rival national groups continued to propagate nationalism within classrooms throughout Macedonia, but from mid-1903 they worked in an environment of terror and violence. Due to their highly visible occupation, teachers were easy targets. Tit for tat assassinations became a near daily occurrence in Macedonia.¹ Many of the victims were teachers.

What had begun as a relatively low-level, local conflict waged by a few intellectuals half a century earlier had grown into a regional struggle with international implications that threatened the peace in Europe. The structure of the Ottoman Empire and the circumstances of its continuing demise in the nineteenth century allowed Christian education to flourish in the Balkans. Encouraged by liberal sympathizers in the West and supporters in neighbouring countries, teachers cultivated nationalism and organized politically through their respective schools and school systems. The overlapping claims of the competing national movements led to an intense propaganda war, which, eventually, erupted into armed conflict with teachers often orchestrating, if not directly leading, the respective guerrilla forces.

While it has been established here that education brought nationalism to Macedonia, two questions remain to be considered in the final conclusion: Who won the education race and how truly effective was education in building national consciousnesses in the minds of the indigenous population of Macedonia?

The education race for Macedonia did not produce a clear winner. Most sources acknowledge that the number of Bulgarian Exarchate schools grew exponentially in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, but the numbers of their rivals grew too. Furthermore, by the turn of the century, Bulgarian unity had been undermined by an organization of Macedonian-born Slav teachers. Population statistics from the era are

¹ John Foster Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans*, 206-207.

“virtually meaningless” as they vary considerably and can be easily dismissed for bias and exaggeration.² Ottoman census figures were taken on the basis of religion,³ a process that counted Slav converts to Islam as Muslims even though they may have spoken Slavic. What is more, Ottoman registries only included men.⁴ In their investigation into the origins of the 1912-13 Balkan Wars, the writers of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace’s report on the causes of the 1912-13 Balkan Wars produced different national tables to show the “divergence in estimate and calculation” by the respective national census gatherers.⁵ Bulgarian statistics claim that Bulgarians made up 53% of Macedonia’s population; Serbian statistics state that Serbs comprised 71% and Greek statistics show Greeks made up 38% of the population.⁶ Of course, each group had different criteria for getting a favourable result. Serbians considered anyone exhibiting Slavic cultural traits, such as participation in a “slava” festival, to be a Serb. Bulgarians made claims based on physiological and linguistic similarities to those in the Bulgarian Principality. To the Greeks, all those who were under the authority of the Patriarchate were considered Greeks regardless of whether or not they spoke Greek.⁷ Thus, many Christian residents of Macedonia were counted as Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek depending on who was in town conducting the survey.

School statistics should be easier to count, but one must consider that pupil numbers varied from school to school; as mentioned, some Serbian schools had very few pupils. Inconsistencies between different sources can also be found in sources cited by modern historians. For instance, Douglas Dakin states that in 1902 there were about 1,000 Greek schools with some 70,000 pupils and 592 Bulgarian schools with 30,000 pupils.⁸ Contrarily, Nadine Lange-Akund cites a French source dated “toward 1900” which reports 613 Greek schools with 32, 476 pupils and 781 Bulgarian schools with

² L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 517.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Intercourse and Education *Report of the International Commission to Inquire in to the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars*, 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 28-30.

⁷ L.S. Stavrianos, *The Balkans Since 1453*, 518.

⁸ Douglas Dakin, *The Greek Struggle in Macedonia, 1897-1913*, 19-20.

39,973 pupils.⁹ Therefore, it is very difficult to make precise conclusions regarding the results of the education race. However, more general conclusions are possible.

On the whole, the education race remained, as it began, as a two party struggle between the Greeks and the Bulgarians. Although worthy of mention, Jewish education was small in scale and did not manifest a nationalism that challenged the Ottoman Empire. The Porte tried to keep its Muslim masses in Macedonia intentionally uneducated and made the Albanian education movement struggle for its very existence. Protestant schools won few converts but provided a tremendous boost to Bulgarian fortunes. Romanian schools made progress, but the Vlachs were far removed from their patrons in Romania. As the struggle became violent, Vlachs found themselves forced into alliances with other movements. Serb results were limited as their campaign was not able to fully coordinate with the Greeks and the Bulgarians successfully countered their monetary incentives. The Greeks solidified their hold in the south and, despite internal divisions, stemmed the southward advance of the Exarchate. Yet, bearing in mind they previously had a near monopoly on education, the Greeks lost considerable numbers to the Exarchate. American printing presses, the establishment of the Exarchate, Bell-Lancaster teaching methodology and the policies of Stephen Stambolov enabled the Bulgarians to take the initiative in Macedonia. The Bulgarians took education to the Slav masses through new schools, offering not only instruction in a Slavic language but a new means of social mobility and a vision of emancipation from Ottoman rule. Territorially, the Bulgarians had the upper hand throughout central and northern Macedonia with the Greeks holding strong in the south. According to the maps of the 1899 survey of rival educational forces in Macedonia by German cartographer Von Mach, the Bulgarian schools predominated in north and central Macedonia between the Sar and Nidza Mountain ranges with an average of twenty schools per district as far south as Kastoria, Thessaloniki and Serres. The Greeks were strongest in the south with some schools in the central zone towns such as Ohrid, Bitola and Strumica. The Serbs had an average of five schools per district across the north with a noteworthy enclave of Vlach schools in the southwest of Macedonia.¹⁰ Von Mach's work provides a general territorial

⁹ Nadine Lange-Akhund, *The Macedonian Question, 1893-1908*, 33.

¹⁰ H.R. Wilkinson, *Maps and Politics A Review of the Ethnographic Cartography of Macedonia*, 119-120.

breakdown consistent with most of the works cited in this study. However, there were dozens of local exceptions and a number of contested areas, which remained as such into the years of violent struggle following the 1903 Ilinden Uprising.

How effective was education in genuinely building national feelings amongst the indigenous populations of Macedonia? By 1903, the educational struggle had been going on for fifty years and had intensified over the previous two decades. Most of the competing parties benefited from the *millet* system and the reform initiatives in the Empire which granted Christian *millets* the right to educate themselves. They also profited from the Porte's divide and rule strategy that resulted in the establishment of more schools and the employment of more teachers. Yet had there been no demand for education by the peasant masses of Macedonia, there would have been no education race. The demand for education was driven by modernity. More people recognized the economic advantages of education and were eager to take their children out of the fields and workshops and put them in classrooms to learn valuable numeracy and literacy skills. Schools became status symbols for villages. Gymnasium education was held in high regard. The Exarchate's gymnasium in Thessaloniki was itself a site of pilgrimage for Slavs in Macedonia to visit. Some were moved to tears during their visits at the sight of the school's modern facilities.¹¹ Poor families made considerable sacrifices to send a child to a gymnasium, such as the older siblings of a Greek boy who pooled their savings and salaries to put their younger brother through one of Thessaloniki's leading Greek gymnasiums.¹² Education was valued and teachers were revered. In Bulgaria, village teachers were called "*Kandilo*," (Candle) since they were said to light the path of learning for the children.¹³ In the villages of Macedonia, the teacher was all there was for an intelligentsia. Thus, the teacher symbolized the modernity the peasants cherished and was able to wield considerable influence on the population.

The people of Macedonia hoped the teacher apostles would guide their children down the path to prosperity. What they got, whether they wanted it or not, was large doses of nationalism in their children's lessons. The environment was ideally tailored to the propagation of nationalism. The schools provided a setting for student inquiry and

¹¹ Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death*, 62.

¹² Lucy Garnett, *Turkish Life in Town and Country*, 238.

learning, which, for the bright or rich, could be continued in larger towns or abroad. For the teachers, the schools were a legitimate venue to engage young Ottoman Christians in stories of past national glory, contemporary injustices, western revolutionaries and visions of a future state free from Ottoman authority. By drawing on past antecedents, cultivating self awareness of religious and linguistic differences, and setting future goals, teachers helped imagine nations into existence by aligning the present with the past and future. The status the teachers enjoyed allowed them to agitate and propagate outside the classroom through speeches, plays and informal conversation. The networks of schools and connections to the “free” states beyond the Ottoman frontier helped the teachers generate national visions. Moreover, school systems provided the infrastructure to build parallel governmental structures and prepare for revolution. The problem was that there were several competing education systems coveting the same territory and the same students. Teachers themselves became targets and some found themselves teaching by day and fighting by night.

Education was instrumental in the propagation of nationalism, but the degree to which the teachers were able to influence students and their families is a disputed point. In 1903 most residents of Macedonia were still peasants, whose primary loyalty was to their family and village. The peasants’ main concern was survival and prosperity. The flow of goods and ideas into the deepest recesses of Macedonia through the nineteenth century had helped convince the peasants of education’s practical value. Nationalist utopias might have sounded all very well, but most peasants had more realistic concerns. Indeed, for practical reasons, be they financial or strategic, many families opted to send their children to different schools. As Brailsford noted:

It is not uncommon to find fathers who are themselves officially “Greeks” equally proud of bringing into the world “Greek,” “Servian,” “Bulgarian,” and “Roumanian” children. The passion for education is strong and the various propagandas pander eagerly for it.¹⁴

Brailsford’s example is not unique. G.F. Abbott, too, described families where each member professed a different nationality. He commented: “Verily no country ever was in

¹³ Irwin T. Sanders, *Balkan Village*, 132.

¹⁴ H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, 102.

such sore need of a herald's office, or of a lunatic asylum, as Macedonia."¹⁵ But later in his book, Abbott found a practical explanation for the split families—money: "Patriotism in too many cases can be described as purse-deep."¹⁶ Abbott noted that the going rate for national loyalty in Eastern Macedonia in 1900 was six Turkish pounds a month.¹⁷ Life and death also factored in one's proclaimed loyalty in Macedonia as John Foster Fraser depicted in his conversation with an innkeeper:

"What are you?" I asked the innkeeper in a village near Koritza, on the borderland of Macedonia. "Well, sir," he replied. "I find it best to be a Greek." There was a Greek "band" in the neighbouring hills.¹⁸

As this passage illustrates, survival dictated allegiance and also likely accounts for the reason why families were seemingly divided and parents were sending different children to different schools. They probably reasoned that one day the borders would change and at least one of their children could lead the family into life in the land of the victors. It was a time of sheer uncertainty. Choosing a school or a nationality in turn of the century Macedonia was rather like choosing a political party. One could always switch later. As accounted by Fraser:

Nationality in Macedonia is a matter of fear, politics and religion. Race has nothing to do with it. Language does not help you much, because most Macedonians are bilingual, and they change their tongue when they change their party. Again, you meet peasants with Hellenic or Bulgarian sentiments who can speak nothing but Turkish.¹⁹

Indeed, mixed identities and shifting loyalties remained the norm in Macedonia at the dawn of the twentieth century. It would appear that the only people with firm national convictions were the propagandists from outside states.

The fact that many in Macedonia apparently enrolled their children in schools for purely practical reasons would seem to seriously mitigate the significance of teachers and education in Macedonia during the latter nineteenth century. Greek historian Basil G. Gounaris considers the fickle nature of national loyalty and established non-ethnic schisms in his 1996 examination of national identity in nineteenth century Ottoman

¹⁵ G.F. Abbott, *The Tale of Tour in Macedonia*, 81.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ John Foster Fraser, *Pictures from the Balkans*, 2-3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 176.

Macedonia. Gounaris maintains that nationalist agitators took advantage of pre-existing “social cleavages” and political instability to propagate their respective causes. He finds the success of the national education campaigns to be “a highly questionable issue.”²⁰ These points considered, one is left wondering whether the national education campaigns won any genuine converts at all.

National education campaigns may not have created legions of followers, but they did prove to be very successful in producing teachers. For this reason, education was the key factor in the nation building process in Macedonia. Education produced a middle class intelligentsia, some members of which formed revolutionary vanguards that were willing to organize and revolt against the old order. Schools provided settings for like-minded young people to congregate and become influenced by nationalist thought. These students acquired middle class sensibilities and revolutionary convictions that put them at odds with the establishment. As a learned middle class, they were a minority, but a respected, elite minority who could obtain teaching jobs which helped them to propagate nationalism and organize revolutionary movements. It mattered less that they did not inspire truly large numbers of adherents to follow them into battle. Indeed, *Philiki Hetaria*, the Bulgarian revolutionaries and IMRO had, at best, only regional mass support. But in the context of the nineteenth century Ottoman Balkans, that was all they needed. Heroic defeats provoked Great Power intervention and made the rebels martyrs of causes which subsequently acquired more of a mass following. The difference between IMRO and the Bulgarians and Greeks was that the Bulgarians and Greeks had better timing and better luck in getting Great Power intervention. Revolutionary movements frequently acquire a mass following after groups of committed radicals take heroic, and often suicidal, actions that draw attention to their cause. Nineteenth century European radicals were likely to be intellectuals. In the Ottoman Balkans, intellectuals were teachers. Considering these points I would suggest—for the Ottoman Balkans at least—that another stage be added to Hroch’s theory of the nation building process. “Scholarly inquiry” and “patriotic agitation” should be followed by “a spectacle of heroic sacrifice” and finally “mass movement.” Nationalism is produced through the national building

²⁰ Basil G. Gounaris, ‘Social Cleavages and National “Awakening” in Ottoman Macedonia,’ *Eastern European Quarterly*, XXIX, No. 4 (1996): 415.

process. In Macedonia, nations were built through education and, therefore, education was at the root of the Macedonian Struggle.

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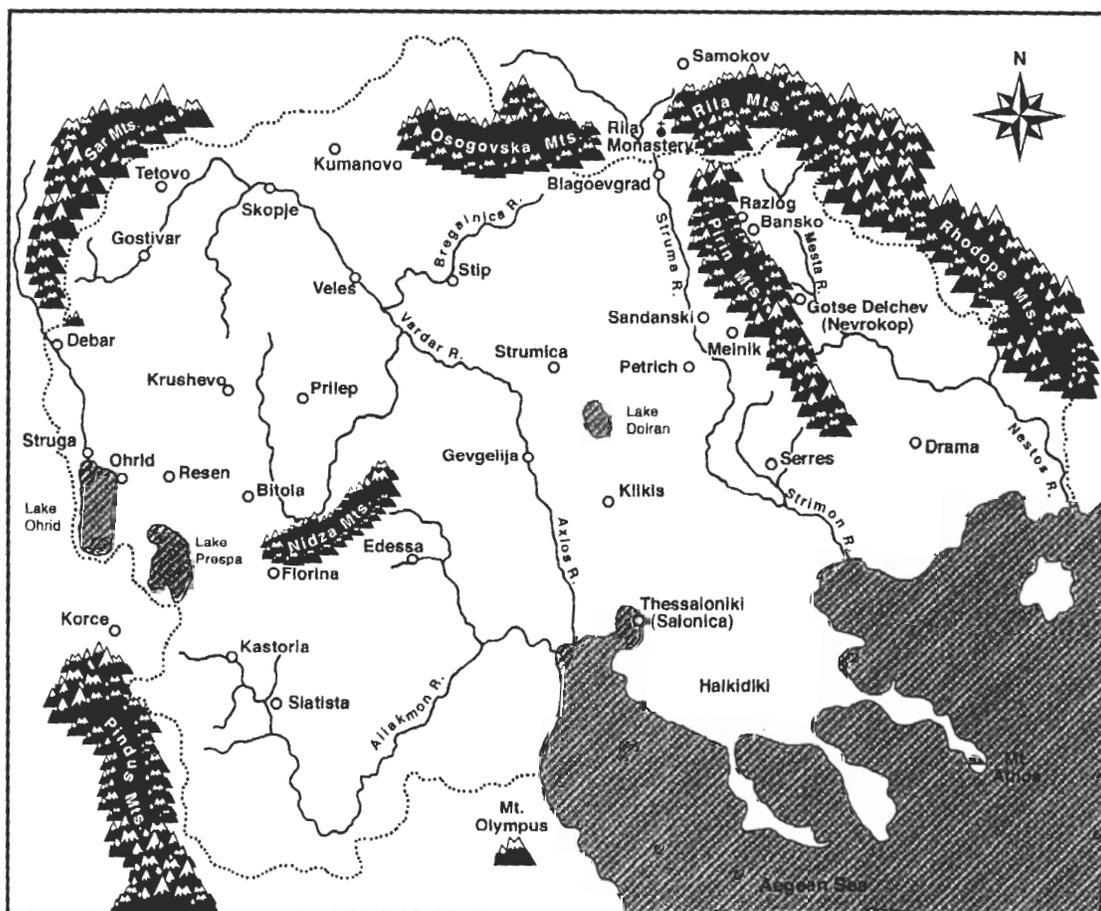
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APPENDIX

Geographic Macedonia



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