

Macedonian State-National Concepts and Programmes up to the End of the First World War

The programmes and concepts for the establishment of a nation are always and basically the work of the intelligentsia of a people, even though their accomplishment is the result of the broad masses of the people. Owing to the structure of Macedonian society in the last quarter of the 19th century, the Macedonian intelligentsia was not great in number. The bulk of this class consisted of teachers and priests, which were the only social groups allowed to develop freely under the Shariah law of Turkey, but always under the wing of existing and already established nationalistic propaganda machines in Macedonia. There were also some rare representatives of the intelligentsia among the classes of tradesmen and craftsmen (mainly in the towns) as well as among some free professions, such as physicians or bankers. All other intellectuals, immediately after their schooling abroad, were forced to emigrate, chiefly to the neighbouring free countries of the Balkans, and most of them had to serve the national and political aspirations of those societies.

In this way, two types of Macedonian intelligentsia gradually developed: (1) **the intelligentsia that was active within the land**, which felt the pulse of the people and thought about and worked on changing the oppressive circumstances, and (2) **the intelligentsia that lived in the free Balkan and other European or non-European countries**, usually living in decent economic conditions, but cut off from their homeland and most frequently serving foreign interests. While the people from the first group were (for the most part) directly dependent on the church-educational institutions of neighbouring propaganda and limited by the constraints of the social and political system of the Sultan's Empire, without any significant economic base which would allow them a stronger national orientation and without any opportunities for free and public articulation of national ideas and aspirations, the second group was largely heterogeneous in composition, and yet, in spite of their fairly good financial situation, they were nationally divided and most often dependent on the political and national concepts that the host countries promulgated with regard to Macedonia. Hence it was the intelligentsia within the land that became the ideological force drawing the masses to the revolutionary movement for the liberation of Macedonia from Ottoman domination and from the terror of propaganda, actively and fully participating within the ranks of the

Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, and building the vision of the future of this people and their homeland upon concepts and programmes of their own.

The intelligentsia among the Macedonians abroad can also be divided into two basic types: those **who were brought up in neighbouring countries**, which aspired to the legacy remaining after the disintegration of Turkey in the Balkans, and those **who lived and worked in other European and non-European countries**, where they had better opportunities and greater freedom to develop their ideas and actions concerning Macedonian national liberation.

Owing to all these circumstances, it is difficult to speak of the Macedonian intelligentsia as a homogeneous class in Macedonian society, and even less as a united national-political section of the people with a joint ideological and national liberation platform.

The stratification in the united body of the Macedonian people could especially be felt following the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 and the Congress of Berlin, and following the unsuccessful Kresna Uprising and the quenching of the hopes aroused in the liberation mission of the Russian army. Religious division of the people also encouraged ethnic confrontation, strongly instigated by the propaganda machines and tolerated by the Turks. Hence of particular significance were the manifestations of Macedonian consciousness expressed through the activity of various societies, committees and circles in Macedonia in the 1880s and 1890s, and especially among the émigrés, where a large number of Macedonian associations were founded, trying to help and be of service to their homeland and their people.

1.

Macedonian national thought emerged in the 1840s, and in the 1870s the main points of the national programme of the Macedonians were already formulated. Even though it tried to base its concept on the ancient Macedonian state-constitutional tradition and culture, the Macedonian movement could not but rely on Slavic history and envisaged its prospects as part of the Slavic world. Hence the strong anti-Hellenic disposition in Macedonia and the interest in the Slavophile tendencies launched by Russia.

Slavic thought in Macedonia had a long tradition and was connected with the Slavonic and Orthodox Middle Ages, with the Archbishopric of Ohrid and in particular with Mount Athos, as well as with the permanent strengthening of the power and influence of Orthodox and Slavic Russia, which directed its interests towards the Bosphorus and the Balkans. This orientation was further intensified after the liberation of Serbia, Greece, Romania and Bulgaria (with the invariable

active involvement of Russia), and was substantially aided by the development of Slavonic studies as a scholarly discipline and Pan-Slavism and Slavophilism as a policy.

Rhigas's former (basically greater-Greek) exaltation was replaced in Macedonia by an anti-Hellenic tendency which invigorated the Slavic feeling to the utmost extent. At the same time various combinations were made in the joint struggle against the Ottoman Empire, but the hopes in Serbia and Russia and the signals coming from there were also taken into consideration.

The Serbo-Croatian agreement in Vienna (1850) as regards the common literary language led to the emergence of similar ideas among the Slavs who were still under Turkish domination. This was the reason for the rise of the ideology proposing a common literary language for the Macedonians and Bulgarians, which would also involve a common future, in line with the concept which later developed of the Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy. Partenija Zografski became the ideologist of this movement which attempted to be based on scholarly foundations with his articles published in the Constantinopolitan and Moscow press. The Miladinov brothers, Kuzman Šapkarev, Dimitar Makedonski and Venijamin Mačukovski took significant practical steps in this direction. This gave rise to a movement which was to have some disastrous consequences for the further development of the liberation struggle.

The more developed cultural and national centres of Bulgarian expatriates in Russia, Romania and, above all, in Constantinople, using their economic power and means of propaganda (periodicals and other publications, church-school organizations, etc.), showed a considerably greater and more effective activity and announced their serious aspirations to take the lead in the common struggle for affirmation. This met with visible resistance, mainly in the form of what appeared as religious movements in Macedonia (1858-1875). This was a time when the Macedonian national programme was built, most accurately understood and best expounded by the most prominent Bulgarian revivalist, Petko Slavejkov, in his articles (1871) and particularly in his letters to the Exarch from Salonika (1874). The Uniate movement and Protestantism were only the means for the attainment of higher goals. Hence it is not surprising that this was a period which saw the publication in Belgrade of Ćorĳi Pulevski's second dictionary, where he so strongly insisted on the Slavic orientation and national individuality of the Macedonians (1875). The Razlovci Uprising (1876), the Conference of Constantinople (1877), the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) and the Congress of Berlin (1878) also introduced new elements into the Macedonian national liberation ideology. It was not by chance that the advance guards of the Russian army infiltrating into Bulgaria consisted of Macedonian voluntary detachments and commanders who, deceived by Russian policy and strategy, believed in the liberation mission of

Russia, and came to Macedonia as far as the Pijanec region. But the Adrianople truce and the preliminary San Stefano peace treaty halted the armed offensive of the Macedonian military formations because the liberation of the whole of Macedonia was envisaged. And when in Berlin Macedonia was once again returned to Turkey, this resulted in the strongest and most important Macedonian insurrection in the 19th century, incorporating the concept of liberation from Ottoman domination, establishment of a Macedonian state, and also unification with its neighbours. Emulating the Austro-Hungarian Act of 1876 and relying on the decisions of the Conference of Constantinople in early 1877, the Macedonians demanded “a Macedonian kingdom”, based on the concept of a dual monarchy with Bulgaria. When this attempt, too, failed (due to the strong reactions in both Bulgaria and Serbia), the Macedonians founded the significant **Macedonian League** with an impressive armed force and worked out the first **Constitution for the State Organization of Macedonia** (1880). With coordinated efforts a **National Assembly of Macedonia** was convened in southern Macedonia, headed by commanders from the Kresna Uprising, and the first **Provisional Government of Macedonia** was formed, whose acts were sent and made known to European diplomacy and the wider public.

From this point onwards an increasing number of proposals were put forward for a **Balkan federation (confederation)** with Macedonia as one of its equal members. Paul Argyriades, a Macedonian living in France, worked out the ideas for such a unification (1885), and Leonidas Voulgaris and Vasil Simov founded the Eastern (or Balkan) Confederation Society in Athens (1887). In the Bulgarian town of Gabrovo, Spiro Gulapčev from Lerin published his book *An Essay on the Ethnography of Macedonia* (1887), where he elaborated the idea of a Balkan federation as the single condition without which there “will be no free Macedonia”.

2.

After **the Congress of Berlin** (1878) Macedonia remained the only Slavic land entirely within the boundaries of Turkey, but Article 23 of the Treaty left some hope for the autonomy of the Macedonians. This was the principal stipulation involving international guarantees for the liberation idea in the ensuing period up to the Treaty of Bucharest (1913), and even after the start of the First World War, when the aforementioned treaty was proclaimed invalid. Hence the **Secret Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organization** (TMORO) invoked Article 23 from the moment of its foundation (1893). A decade later it started the Ilinden Uprising (1903) by the same token, demanding, above all, autonomy, and elaborating it in different variations and combinations. We must emphasize that during

this whole period the main obstacle to the normal development of the Macedonian people was not the political authority of Turkey but the aggressive nationalistic propaganda coming from Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece, which shortly after the Ilinden Uprising was transformed into armed “detachment activities” and which finally shattered the Macedonian people as a whole. The autonomy announced at the Reval summit between the sovereigns of Russia and Great Britain (1908), as a result of the failure of the Mürzsteg Reforms, was adroitly forestalled by the premature, and not accidental, start of the Young Turk Revolution precisely in Macedonia (1908). The earlier struggle on the part of the neighbouring monarchies to secure spheres of influence in this Turkish province, following the Young Turk revolt turned into a no less fierce struggle by these monarchies for the partition of the territory of Macedonia. This, on the initiative of the Kingdom of Serbia, led to the signing of inter-state accords on a war against Turkey for the purpose of acquiring and dividing the “Turkish legacy”.

During this period the Macedonian people was not only the object of foreign combinations and actions, but also a subject which the aspirants had to take into account. Contemporary historiographers seem to pay little attention to or even try to forget the fact that at the time there was an already formed Macedonian national consciousness forced to develop in peculiar circumstances. Krste Misirkov was not the founder of the Macedonian national idea, as has often been suggested, but only the proponent of Macedonian national aspirations (*Za makedonckite raboti*, 1903, and *Vardar*, 1905). Macedonian national thought emerged towards the late 18th and early 19th century and was fully expressed in the 1840s; it was defined as a programme in early 1874 and became affirmed on the international scene in 1878, and the ‘Lozars’ (1890-1894) in Sofia and the ‘Vardar’ members (1893-1894) in Belgrade were only the public reflection of what had been taking place in Macedonia itself, in particular in the movement led by Teodosija Gologanov.

3.

At that time the following speculations could be heard in Belgrade: “The Macedonians are either Serbs or Bulgarians. If they are Serbs, we are not giving them to anyone. If they are not Serbs — we are not giving them anyway, as we need them.” Macedonian émigrés in Serbia, however, managed to establish a **Macedonian Club with a Reading Room** as a branch of the **Slavonic Club** in Belgrade, side by side with the Russian, the Czech and the announced Bulgarian Clubs (1902). They started publishing their printed mouthpiece, *Balkanski Glasnik*, which was the first periodical publicly to proclaim the Macedonian language as literary (with phonetic orthography). Yet when they tried to submit a memorandum

to “the representatives of the great powers — signatories to the Treaty of Berlin”, the Club was shut down, the newspaper banned, and the main activists expelled from Serbia.

At the time when a joint Slavonic association was active in the Russian capital (*Slavjanskaja Beseda*) and there were already established national societies of Czech, Bulgarian and Serbian young people, the **Macedonian Scholarly and Literary Society** was founded in St Petersburg on October 28, 1902 (old style). Its principal objectives were the prevention of national disunion among the Macedonians and the encouragement of their association “on the grounds of the unity of their fatherland, their same descent and future, and also on the basis of joint study of their fatherland from the historical, ethnographic, folklore and linguistic points of view”. As early as November 12, 1902, the special **Memorandum** to the Russian government and to the Council of the St Petersburg Slavonic Charitable Society presented the most comprehensive Macedonian national programme for the winning of a “free Macedonia in political, national and spiritual respect” in order “to avoid antagonism among the Slavs from various areas of the Balkan Peninsula and to unite them into a single national-cultural whole”. It envisaged that in the initial period Macedonia was to be granted basic autonomous rights and freedoms in accordance with Article 23 of the Treaty of Berlin — where the Macedonians would be recognized “as a separate people with a distinct literary language which will become, together with Turkish, the official language in the three vilayets of Macedonia: Kosovo, Bitola and Salonika,” and which would also involve “the recognition of an independent church”, with a governor-general from among the majority nationality and a deputy from the less numerous nationality, with a “regional elective popular assembly” as well as an “organic statute” from the Sultan which would be guaranteed “by the European great powers”, acting as an autonomous unit “like the province of Lebanon” within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Yet “such a free Macedonia in its political, national and religious aspects,” says the memorandum, “will aim to attract the neighbouring states to it in a federation and fulfil its mission peacefully and quietly. In a word, only this kind of Macedonia can appear on the Balkan Peninsula in the role of a true Piedmont for the unification of Balkan Slavdom and Orthodoxy.” On December 29, 1902, the boundaries of that Macedonia were defined and it was decided to compile a parallel Macedonian-Bulgarian-Serbian-Russian dictionary in order to demonstrate to the Russians and foreigners that Macedonian was an individual and distinct language in the Slavonic group of languages.

This programme was reflected in the **Constitution of the Macedonian Scholarly and Literary Society** of December 16, 1903. Article 12 officially introduced the Macedonian language into literary use for the first time, while Krste Misirkov carried out that decision in practice by the publication of his book *Za makedonckite*

raboti. This book was to become the basis of the modern Macedonian literary language and orthography, which were legitimized by an act of state in 1944 at the First Session of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia.

4.

The **Macedonian Club** in Belgrade was restored in early 1905, this time headed by Grigorije Hadžitašković and Đorđe Đerđiković. The initiative originated from Macedonia and gathered a large number of adherents. Its programme envisaged the “autonomy of Macedonia, which has its own regional interests — like those of Montenegro” and it “can and should lead to a confederation of the Balkan peoples, where it would constitute a separate political unit”. The mouthpiece of the Macedonian Club, *Avtonomna Makedonija*, which first appeared in Belgrade on October 12, 1905, presented the Club’s programme for “the autonomy of Macedonia under guarantees from the great powers and the small Balkan states” and “for a Balkan confederation with Macedonia as a member”.

After many problems, the Macedonian Club was again closed, and its newspaper banned following its tenth issue. But its ideas remained: “Autonomy, separatism, denial of all aspirations towards our Fatherland from wherever they come, solidarity of all Christian peoples constituting the Macedonian population, a Balkan confederation — these are the ideas from which no difficulties will turn us away, nor will any events that our opponents might use against our understanding of this question.” For, the Macedonians said: “Macedonia is neither Serbian nor Bulgarian, but ours, Macedonian; the cognizant sons of this land will conclude or not conclude agreements as dictated by the circumstances, not seeking blessing for their activities from priests or candidates for consulships frequenting the editorial offices of certain newspapers.” And while “various committees continue their work, preaching Serbianism, Bulgarianism or Hellenism in Macedonia, arming one group against another, brother against brother, because the first say that Macedonia is Serbian, the second Bulgarian, and the third Greek”, while “in Macedonia there lives a Slavic element of which it has not been proved either historically or ethnographically that it is a purely Serbian or purely Bulgarian element, mingled with the Greeks, Tsintsars [Vlachs], Arnauts [Albanians] and Turks”, such “brotherly” help offered to the Macedonians is unacceptable and “from now on the Macedonian people will refuse that help and will fight alone as far as it can for its own freedom, for the freedom of its own land. When it once becomes free, it will easily organize its national relations.” They made the following known to the aspirants and the whole world: “Our newspaper spreads

neither Serbian nor Bulgarian ideas, but Macedonian ones. Whoever wants to discuss autonomy should do this with the Macedonians and with no one else.”

This activity was suppressed in 1905, but the idea continued its development. It was not by chance that Grigorije Hadžitašković in 1917 became the proponent of a genuine south-Slav platform in the **Voden Declaration**, and in the next year he travelled as far as Corfu in order to explain his concepts, in a special *Promemoria*, to Pašić’s government, although everyone once again refused to hear the voice of the Macedonian.

5.

We still do not know much about the ‘**Russian Party in the Bitola region**’ in 1910, and there is no detailed research on the activity of Marko A. Mušević and his mission to Russia at that period, when a special **Memorandum to the Russian Government and the Russian Church** was submitted. Nor do we know very much about the missions of Krste Misirkov in 1909 and of Dimitrija Čupovski in 1911 in Macedonia. Yet we know a great deal about the establishment and concepts of the **Ss Cyril and Methodius Slavonic-Macedonian National and Educational Society** in St Petersburg from June 27, 1912 onwards, whose Article 31 of its Constitution considered “the Slavonic-Macedonian language as the spoken and written language”; and about the concepts of the **Bitola Circle** expressed in its act of August 15, 1912, and also about the presentations of Čupovski, Dimov, Dr Konstantinovič and others in the Russian capital, and their warnings that “in Macedonia it smells of death” and their anticipation of future historical events. “The victory of the Slavic Alliance, if achieved,” they said, “is absolutely undesirable from a Slavic point of view, as this will be a requiem for the descendants of Cyril and Methodius: Macedonia will be divided into three parts, there will be a temporary triumph over its body, but no one will be satisfied, a fight will unavoidably break out among those who dismembered it and there will be no bright day for the Slavs”, and “the outcome will inevitably be a European war and the partition of Macedonia”.

Seeing the speedy preparations for war in the Balkans, in early September 1912, the Macedonians pointed out: “The Macedonians want political freedom, but public opinion (the people) in Serbia and Bulgaria also wants freedom for Macedonia, as the Macedonians will then return to their own fatherland. Of course, there are also aspirations in Bulgaria and Serbia to the creation of a Greater Bulgaria or a Greater Serbia, but this is not the voice of the people.”

The voice of the neighbouring monarchies, however, spoke through the barrels of the cannons and what ensued was what the Macedonians had predicted —

concerning both the partition of Macedonia and mutual conflicts, as well as the World War.

6.

When the First Balkan War started, in order to be at the scene of events, Krste Misirkov went to southern Macedonia (in the capacity of correspondent for Russian newspapers), Dr Gavril Konstantinovič volunteered as a doctor on the Montenegrin front, Nace Dimov arrived in Sofia (to test the opinion of the Macedonian émigré community), and Dimitrija Čupovski came, through Sofia and Skopje, to Veles, where the **General Macedonian Secret Conference** was scheduled with the purpose of reaching an agreement on the actions to be taken before the eyes of Europe in view of the threat to Macedonia's integrity and for its liberation. But the armies of occupation offered no opportunities for any effective steps by the Macedonians. Čupovski was **authorized** as a representative to Europe and returned to St Petersburg in late December 1912. As early as January 27, 1913, he published his article on the situation and prospects of Macedonia. Making a survey of its history from 1878 onwards and describing the participation of the Macedonians in the present war against Turkey, Čupovski wrote as a witness:

Now, when the action for Macedonia's liberation has been completed, i.e. the Turkish authorities have been driven away, and the allies have instituted their own occupation authorities instead, now the prospects for Macedonia's future seem even gloomier and sadder than before. From the attitude of the occupation authorities towards the Macedonian population it is clear that Macedonia's former slavery has been replaced by an even worse one, not only political, but also spiritual, and furthermore, a triple one. In the territories of Macedonia seized by the allies the situation has become unbearably difficult. Even before peace with Turkey is concluded, the occupation authorities are using draconian measures to deny the population their nationality, their name and their vows, in the name of which this people has fought for freedom.

Čupovski concluded that the Macedonian people had no opportunities to express their views to the world public, because "the purported liberators, the occupation authorities, have resorted to measures hitherto unknown in history: the entire population is condemned to internment and has no rights to travel not only outside the borders of Macedonia but also from town to town. Macedonian detachment heads — the commanders — and the fighters themselves, who until yesterday fought shoulder to shoulder with the allies against the common enemy, have now become the object of persecution by these same occupation authorities. For a single word uttered to anyone in favour of Macedonia's indivisibility and its

political freedom, they are subjected to horrible persecution, torture and murder. All this is supported by hundreds of facts, many of which have been reported by correspondents of Russian and especially foreign newspapers.” As Russia was the catalyst of the Balkan Alliance, the presentation of these facts to the Russian public was undesirable. But Čupovski reported that there had already been “open clashes” over certain cities and towns between the Bulgarians and Greeks, and even between the Bulgarians and Serbs. “All that makes the allies hold back from mutual war,” concluded the author, “is the conclusion of peace with Turkey,” because “[i]nternal Slavic discord is more dangerous for the Balkan states than the schemes of their numerous external enemies. Slavery under a kindred brother will for Macedonia be as difficult as slavery under an alien or people of another faith.”

At about the same time the experienced Macedonian activist Georgij Georgov started a sharp polemic with the Bulgarophiles of *Slavjanskija Izvěstija*, declaring, among other things, that “*the autonomy of Macedonia* — this is the best and most equitable way to the settlement of the Macedonian question,” and supported the establishment, as a priority, of a **Balkan federation** of peoples living outside Austria-Hungary, or, if this was impossible, of a **South-Slav federation** which would include only Bulgaria, Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

On March 29, 1913, in his article ‘The Macedonian State’, Dimitrija Čupovski, horrified by the imminent military conflict among the allies for the partition of Macedonia and seeking a solution for the Macedonian people as a whole, declared: “The preservation of Macedonia’s independence and its entirety will be equally useful for all Balkan nationalities and states... The division of Macedonia, on the other hand, in addition to the energetic opposition by the Macedonians themselves, *will unavoidably lead* to mutual bloody struggle among the allies: each one of them will also want to rule those parts it was forced to leave to its fellow fighters.” Therefore he recommended: “The independence of Macedonia will be a buffer between the rival Balkan states. It will thus cease to be the apple of discord, in the struggle for which more than one state has ruined its former greatness. This rivalry is sufficiently strong even today: the Pan-Hellenic idea excludes the Greater-Bulgarian one, and neither of them recognizes the Greater-Serbian one.” As a result, Čupovski concluded: “*Only a federal state, consisting of all the Balkan peoples, which must include a Macedonia indivisible and independent as to its internal affairs, enjoying equal rights* — only such a federation can secure peaceful coexistence and progress for the Balkan peoples.”

We find almost the same line of thought in the separately published lecture by Nace Dimov of March 4, 1913, before the St Petersburg Slavonic Charitable Society, where the author is convinced that “a second war for the partition of Macedonia is imminent”, and that “the Macedonian question will be the cause of a general European war”. He pointed out that “the Macedonians have a one-hun-

dred-percent right to independence and a right not to be subjected to dismemberment among the Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians”, even though “the Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian governments are not particular about the means for the expansion of their borders and exterminate the Macedonians who refuse to call themselves Serbs, Greeks or Bulgarians and those who do not speak Serbian or Greek”. Dimov threatened: “The Macedonian people will never be reconciled with those who aim to deprive them of their language, customs and the natural right to be the free masters of their home.” And since “the motto of the Balkan Alliance was the liberation of the Orthodox people from Turkish slavery”, the Macedonians declared that “they do not want to be divided, but want to be free and independent,” as “Macedonia must remain a whole and indivisible Slavic unit” and it “must participate in the Balkan Alliance as an independent Balkan state”.

These demands also included those “written protests submitted in Salonika to the Bulgarian tsar and heir to the throne”, confirmed in late December 1912 by Pavel Milyukov and forming an essential part of the first **Memorandum on the Independence of Macedonia**. This Memorandum was submitted on March 1, 1913, in the name of the St Petersburg Macedonian Colony, by the authorized representatives, Dr Gavril Konstantinovič, Nace Dimov, Dimitrija Čupovski and Aleksandar Vezekov, to the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, and to the ambassadors of the great powers to the Court in London, as well as to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs and the editorial offices of all major Russian newspapers. There they protested against what was being done in Macedonia, as the Macedonian Colony “cannot look without pain at this funeral procession — at the burial of their unfortunate fatherland of Macedonia, at the burial and destruction of the political and spiritual life of the whole nation, at the burial of the fatherland of the holy Cyril and Methodius,” as “the partition of Macedonia, by our Slavic brothers at that, is an inhuman act in the history of peoples, a severe violation of the rights of Man, a disgrace and shame to all Slavdom”, and hence the demand: “Macedonia should remain a single, indivisible and independent Balkan state within its geographical, ethnic, historical, economic and cultural borders.”

7.

When the conflict among the allies was already apparent on the horizon, on June 9, 1913, the first issue of the most significant Macedonian periodical up to the Liberation, *Makedonskij Golos* (*Makedonski Glas*), appeared. It was unquestionably the most complete archive of the thoughts and actions of the Macedonian people at the most sublime moment in Macedonian history. In the course of a year

and a half, the 11 issues of the journal presented the true feelings and aspirations of the Macedonians to the international public, serving as the most competent mouthpiece of the struggle for the preservation of Macedonia's integrity and freedom. It published a large number of ideas dealing with the future organization of the Balkans and the Slavic world and about the place of Macedonia there. But as a result of joint actions by Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece in St Petersburg/Petrograd, the journal was finally banned in November 1914. Yet this was by no means the end of the endeavours of the Macedonians to attain their national liberation objectives.

June 7, 1913, saw the publication of the second **Memorandum of the Macedonians to the Governments and the Public Opinion of the Allied Balkan States**, signed by the "authorized persons", Dimitrija Čupovski, Georgi Georgov, Nace D. Dimov, Dr Gavril Konstantinovič and Chem[ical] Eng[ineer] I. Georgov. The demands were formulated in five items that again envisaged Macedonia's association with Balkan relations.

This was a period when a number of declarations and resolutions were made with the participation of the Macedonians living in the Russian capital, and they always involved a broader **Balkan or South-Slav federal community**. Yet the Second Balkan War and the Peace Treaty of Bucharest, dictated by the 'victors', also sanctioned the partition of Macedonia in terms of international law and in fact. But peace was still not secured, and the great world war was yet to come.

8.

To secure a legal representative body, the Macedonians tried to form the Ss Cyril and Methodius Russian-Macedonian Charitable Society and on November 25, 1913, proposed a 'Constitution' with roughly the same goals and tasks as those of 1903 and 1912. The Russian authorities, however, on the insistence of Serbia, once again refused to issue a permit for the activity of this society. After the intervention of the Serbian diplomatic representative in St Petersburg, the Russian government stopped the publication of the journal *Makedonskij Golos (Makedonski Glas)*, but six months later, at the moment when the First World War broke out and new hopes arose for the annulment of the Treaty of Bucharest, it started appearing again. The editorial board was forbidden to publish attacks against the Kingdom of Serbia, as this stood on the side of Russia in the war, but the articles in the two last issues were full of testimonies about the struggle of the Macedonians for liberation and unification.

At the time when the journal was banned, the Macedonian Colony expressed its views on specific questions through separate publications; for instance, the

leaflet *The Pseudo-Slavophiles and the Macedonophobes of the New Times* was published in 1914 in Petrograd. It was under the name **Vražinovski** and presented the essentials of the Macedonian national programme at that historical moment:

We, Macedonian autonomists, have always been sincere Slavophiles, for us there are neither Jews nor Greeks among the Slav or non-Slav nations – they are all our brothers. Our programme is not narrowly nationalistic, but general for all the Slavs. Our holy ideal has always been and will be: the unification of the whole of Slavdom under the sponsorship of Russia; it will gain its real power only when every Slavic nation voluntarily joins the future Slavic states, by fully preserving national and political freedom, and not through violent and fratricidal division...

Fully explaining this broad Slavic programmatic orientation, Vražinovski wrote:

The small peoples on the Balkan Peninsula can exist only on federal principles and without doubt under the protectorship of the great powers, as otherwise they will be greatly weakened by blows of mutual extermination, economic slavery and militarism, and will be easily devoured by the strong stomach of some of the neighbouring great powers.

An important article by Krste Misirkov, entitled ‘Macedonia and Slavdom’ (1914), also emphasized the role of Macedonia in the unification of Slavdom, but this, writes the author, “will rid us of misfortune and harsh disappointments, will begin healing our wounds and establish a permanent peace in the Balkans on the basis of national independence for all Balkan peoples. Then Macedonia, too, will obtain what belongs to her.” Misirkov threateningly reminds that if the Slavs fail to help the Macedonian people, “help may come from another side, which will deal a new blow both to Slav self-centredness and the interests of Slavdom”.

9.

When Russia joined the First World War, on August 6, 1914, **Krste Misirkov** delivered a notable speech at a large **General Slavic Assembly** in Odessa, and replying to a cable by the Russian Tsar to the Poles in the Minsk province “for the final unification of the whole of Slavdom and for the bright future of its individual peoples”, and also in reply to the special manifesto for Poland, he stated: “Macedonia, that second Poland, also has the legal right to a manifesto for its unification and restoration of the empire of Tsar Samuel and King Volkašin,” because, among other things, “[a]s the homeland of the Slavonic apostles, the holy Cyril and Methodius, of the Slavonic script and the old literary and church language of the whole of Orthodox Slavdom, possessing the oldest Slavonic culture, as a land

which has defended its Slavic national individuality over a period of 1,400 years, enduring in the most persistent struggle against the eternal enemies of Slavdom in the Balkans — the Greeks and the Turks — where the past 20 years of the history of Macedonia have been a continuous and widespread uprising of the Macedonians against the Turks, Macedonia, with its participation in the First Balkan War against Turkey and in the struggle of Serbia against Austria-Hungary, deserves the same promises and the same prize as the dismembered, into three parts, Poland.”

In his article ‘The Macedonian and Bulgarian National Ideals’, published in the journal *Makedonskij Golos (Makedonski Glas)*, Misirkov again condemned Bulgarian policy towards Macedonia and the Bulgarophile inclinations of some Macedonians: “It is time to reject the Bulgarian screen which blocks our way to directly addressing the conscience of civilized Europe for help and support. Because of the mistakes of Bulgaria, they do not see our historical merits and national virtues. It is time that the whole world understood that a Macedonian people lives in Macedonia, and not Serbian or Bulgarian or Greek, and that this people has its own history, its own national dignity, its own major historical merits in the cultural history of Slavdom.” Misirkov was convinced that “no one will succeed in eradicating this old Slavic culture and establishing their interests in a wilderness such as this” and that “Macedonia will survive all misfortunes”, because the major figures of Macedonian history will “serve as a message to the sons of Macedonia that a bright future awaits Macedonia, once it joins, united and liberated, as an equal member, the family of the Balkan peoples”.

Of special significance is the **Memorandum to the Russian Government**, submitted in August 1914 by Čupovski and Misirkov, on behalf of the Macedonian colonies in Petrograd and Odessa, to Prince G.N. Trubetskoy, in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This extensive and very important document makes a full survey of the history of Macedonia and of the ‘Macedonian question’, underlining the continuous character of the national liberation struggle of the Macedonian people and its significance for the Slavic world, and concluding with the appeal: “We hope that Russia will not forget Macedonia either, and that this time the Macedonian question will be resolved primarily in the interest of the local population and then in the interest of Russia and Slavdom.”

In addition to this memorandum, the activists of the Macedonian Colony in Petrograd sent a number of official documents to the international and Balkan public as well as to the Macedonian people, in which they explained in detail their views of the struggle for freedom and the future of the Macedonian people. For instance, in the **Appeal to the Macedonian People** ‘Let us Set Out towards a Slavic Victory’, the authorized representatives called:

Let us remind ourselves, Macedonians, that our fathers and grandfathers have always fought not only for the Macedonian, but also for the general Slavic cause. Let us remind ourselves that the whole weight of the struggle on the Balkan Peninsula against historical aggressors have always fallen on the Macedonian Slavs and we have fought it with honour, in so far as our forces have allowed. Let us remind ourselves that only the persistence of the enslaved Macedonians encouraged the hopes, vigour and determination of our south-Slav neighbours, whose mutual reconciliation is ordained by destiny itself to free Macedonia. Let us remind ourselves of all that and let us join the pan-Slavic ranks, not in the rear, but in the same front line. Let us set out where the Russian state banner has been leading the whole of Slavdom, that is towards victory.

With the signatures of Dimitrija D. Čupovski, Nace D. Dimov, Georgi A. Stojanov, P. Božidarski, Done Peškovski, K. Georgiev and Grigor N. Ugrinovski, the **Macedonian Colony in Petrograd** also sent a special appeal “*to their brothers in Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece*”, as “the foremost fighters for the Christian-Slavic idea on the Balkan Peninsula”, calling upon the Macedonians to join “the holy war” for “the unification of the whole of Slavdom and for the bright future of its individual peoples”.

The editorial board of *Makedonskij Golos (Makedonski Glas)* also declared that “it will fight with an even greater force for the necessary south-Slavic brotherly rapprochement, which is unimaginable without a fair position towards Macedonia, which seeks freedom and unification of all its parts which are currently cut off from each other”.

The Macedonians stated that “they have suffered enough for their right to freedom” and rose up against Bulgaria’s trade with Macedonia in “the most important moment for Slavdom”, declaring that their place was “within the Slavic ranks”, as “only a free Macedonia will make the existence of a strong Slavic family in the Balkans possible and, reconciling the Serbs and Bulgarians, it will be an imposing power to scare the enemy and help friends and relatives”.

A document of particular significance was the **Resolution of the Macedonian Émigrés** in which “the Macedonians find it necessary to declare that this important moment... demands from all of us, the children of our only mother Slavia, a great responsibility and full unity not only on the battlefield, but also beyond it, so that no acts engendering disunion of the Slavic forces can darken with sadness the foreheads of the fighters for the Slavic cause”, as a result of which we, “the Macedonian exiles, in full accord with those who have remained there in our unfortunate, suffering fatherland, declare that today, in the face of the terrible common enemy, we believe that it is impossible to wage internal war against our brothers and neighbours who have insulted us, and leaving the settlement of our Macedonian question *as regards securing the independence, autonomy and entirety of our fatherland* to the near future and entrusting our destiny to the

righteousness of Russia, we are now standing up together with the whole of Slavdom, shoulder to shoulder with them, not laying our arms aside as long as the enemy of Slavdom is not fully defeated”.

In the last issue of *Makedonskij Golos (Makedonski Glas)*, November 20, 1914, Čupovski, Peškovski, Ugrinovski and Božidarski published an extensive **Appeal of the Macedonians Patriots to the Popular Representatives of Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece**, in which they wrote that one of the main reasons for the outbreak of “the great European war which has engulfed the peoples of virtually the entire world” was the Macedonian question itself, and therefore “the desires of the Macedonians themselves” and “their national aspirations”, which “have been expressed more than once in the past years” had to be heard; “they are known to both European diplomacy and the Balkan politicians and statesmen”, in which “it is clearly and decisively said: *Macedonia should be autonomous, united and independent*”. For “Bulgaria has no greater rights to Macedonia than the Serbs or Greeks who have also at one time, just like the Bulgarians, ruled our fatherland as conquerors. But conquest by force does not deprive the people of their national character, of their desire to feel as they feel and not as something else, and to fight for the recognition of their independence”. After making a detailed survey of Macedonia’s historical destiny over the centuries, the Appeal warned:

Naturally and logically, Macedonia’s liberation can be achieved only through the restoration of its independence. And the present partition of the land or the currently propagated new partition or the annexation of the majority of the Slavonic-Macedonian land by any state can by no means be an equitable solution; no one will be satisfied and the Balkan peoples will never be pacified.

Precisely with this in mind, we, the Macedonian patriots, are appealing now, at this exceptionally important moment, both historically and politically, to you, our brothers in Slavic blood – Serbs and Bulgarians – and to you, our brothers in the Orthodox faith – Greeks – reminding you of the great responsibility ordained to you by destiny, entrusting the settlement of the question of Macedonia to you. Remember, brothers, an ethnically homogeneous people is a living body which will be condemned to death if cut into pieces.

Relying again on the statement issued by Russia “for the liberation of all the Slavs and the satisfaction of their national yearnings” and reminding Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece that “they can also hope to receive the support of Russia and the approval of the great powers on the issue of satisfying their state interests which are not in contravention of the proclaimed principles of the liberation war”, and also pointing to the attitude of Russia, Britain and France “towards the peoples of Austria-Hungary and Germany which are subjected to German-Hungarian slavery”, and which have been “promised full freedom and independence”, the Appeal spoke out poignantly:

And you whom, regardless of what we have experienced, we are still calling brothers, will you not follow the example of the great powers and will you not utter the long awaited brotherly word to us, admitting the past enmity and the Bucharest partition of our fatherland as a serious mistake which should be rectified and relegated to oblivion as soon as possible?

We declare unto you that *we, the Macedonians, are not Serbs, we are not Bulgarians and we are not Greeks*, and yet our heart is open for love and eternal friendship with all of you. Relinquish only what, in the excitement of bitterness, engendered by the surreptitious intrigues of our common enemies, you have captured with your sword and *can retain only with the force of arms*. And give us, the Macedonians, an opportunity to organize life in our native land in accordance with our own interests. *Do not binder Macedonia from becoming unified, autonomous and independent*. The freedom of Macedonia will bring peace to you; it will put an end to the hostility between the Balkan peoples. The freedom of Macedonia is the necessary condition for the permanence and completeness of the freedom of the whole of South-Slavdom.

The article ‘The Final Hour Has Struck’ is written along the ‘South-Slavdom’ lines as interpreted by the Macedonians of the time. Starting from the premise that “Macedonia does not want to, cannot and should not be Bulgarian”, and that “it should be neither Greek nor Serbian”, the article examines all the options in connection with the war and concludes that precisely that “independent Macedonia” will become “the central core of Slavdom on the Balkan Peninsula and will soon lead to the reconciliation and unification of all South Slavs”.

10.

That is how the Macedonians thought and acted up to the end of 1914. After that, in the interest of its “allied” friends, Russia took steps to shut the mouth of the Macedonians. Their attempts to present their views through certain scholarly and other societies were promptly blocked. Yet we must mention the ‘Resolution on the Macedonian Question accepted by the Special Commission of the Council of the Society of Slavonic Mutuality’ (Petrograd, June 8, 1915), which was also separately issued as a publication by the editorial board of the journal *Makedonskij Golos (Makedonski Glas)* which had been shut down earlier. This very important document was prepared by a commission chosen by the council of this distinguished Russian association, composed of four Russians, two Macedonians, two Serbs and two Bulgarians. After submitting “a series of papers” on “the question of the destiny of Macedonia and its population” by representatives of the interested Slavic nationalities — Macedonians, Serbs and Bulgarians — the conclusion was the following:

(1) The most equitable solution to the question would be the establishment of an integral independent Macedonia by taking those parts of Macedonia from Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria which they captured in 1913. In this way, this long-suffering land, dismembered into three parts, will finally be constituted as a single and united state able to develop freely and live independently.

The next five items of the Resolution defined the other elements in connection with the achievement of this goal, and the four items of the explication more closely described “the huge practical difficulties which would be connected with putting this resolution into effect”. Here we should not forget that this was a time when Macedonia was being auctioned off on the Balkan market as a condition for Bulgaria and Greece joining the warring parties. On August 4, 1915, the forces of the Entente issued an ultimatum to Serbia to leave eastern Macedonia to Bulgaria as a condition for winning Bulgaria as an ally. At that time Pašić’s government already had regular contacts with the Yugoslav Committee in Rome, Paris and London. On August 10, the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Serbia, at a closed session, passed a resolution on the final objectives of the war in the spirit of the Niš Declaration. It was in these days of August 1915 that Dimitrija Čupovski sent the following cable, in the name of the Macedonians in Russia, to the president of the Serbian National Assembly:

At this moment when Serbia is deciding the question which determines the future destiny of long-suffering Macedonia, we, the Macedonians, express our ardent conviction that the brotherly Serbian people will resolve the Macedonian question in full conformity with the rightful national aspirations of the Slav Macedonians, a huge part of whom are now fighting together with the Serbs in the name of Slavic freedom and Slavic happiness. An equitable decision by the Serbian Assembly will not mean a new partition of Macedonia but the restoration of its unity, recognized by item two of the Serbo-Bulgarian Accord of February 29, 1912, which envisages the establishment of an autonomous Macedonia.

Serbia, however, refused to negotiate the Vardar part of Macedonia which now came within its borders. Bulgaria accepted the offer of the Central Powers and joined them on October 14, 1915. Serbia suffered a total military defeat and its army had to seek a way out through Albania to the island of Corfu. Negotiations started between the Serbian government and the Yugoslav Committee. The Corfu Conference began on June 15, 1917, ending with the adoption of the Corfu Declaration of the Kingdom of Serbia and the Yugoslav Committee for the establishment of a Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

11.

Macedonian activists abroad (there was no possibility whatsoever of any activity inside their homeland) did not interrupt their battle for the unification of Macedonia in the crucial stages of the war. Dimitrija Čupovski wrote that he set out “in the spring of 1916 to Romania, through which I wanted to reach Macedonia, but I was unsuccessful and had to give up any further attempts”. Surviving sources confirm that on March 18 he actually crossed the border near Ungheni, Romania, but was unable to reach Macedonia.

When revolutionary commotion started in Russia and the government of the Mensheviks and the Socialist Revolutionary Party (*ESERY*) was formed on May 5, 1917, the Macedonian Revolutionary Committee, the Ss Cyril and Methodius Macedonian Scholarly and Literary Society and the Editorial Board of *Makedonskij Golos* (*Makedonski Glas*) stepped up their activity and published “a series of appeals to the Balkan peoples for the overthrow of all existing dynasties on the Peninsula and for the establishment of a ‘Balkan Federal Democratic Republic’ headed by a council”. On June 18, 1917 (old style), the central Petrograd newspapers printed the complete programme for this federation in prominent positions on their pages. This was actually a project in response and reaction to the Corfu Declaration, which was basically unitarist in concept and involved “a three-named people in a compact and consistent mass” using three equal “names of peoples”: Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Macedonia was envisaged as representing nothing more than a part of Serbia, all of which was to be incorporated into the enlarged kingdom.

The democratic programme involving the federal Balkan concept prepared by the **Macedonian Revolutionary Committee**, the Society and the Editorial Board, was a unique achievement in the thinking of all South Slavs of that time. It was close to the Social Democratic federalist concepts of the Balkans at the time, but a detailed analysis shows that it involved a unique vision of the establishment of a federation which in many respects anticipated the organization of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but one that included all the Balkan entities. Let us examine some of its basic points.

Starting from the situation in Macedonia in the current historical circumstances of a world war whose end was already in sight, and in response to the provisions of the Corfu Declaration and the genuine aspirations and needs of the Balkan peoples, the Macedonians sent an appeal, shortly before the start of the October Revolution, to all the peoples in the Balkans for the foundation of a democratic alliance, choosing ideas that reflected their basic concepts as the motto of their document: “The Balkans to the Balkan peoples. Full self-determination for every nation.” Expecting that the long world war would “bring freedom and self-deter-

mination to many enslaved peoples”, the signatories to this programme posed the settlement of the question of Macedonia as the central problem, defining their democratic-revolutionary programme in 11 detailed points.

Of special significance are the provisions contained in point 5: “[N]ot only ethnically homogeneous states are recognized as independent republics in the Balkans, but also those regions with mixed populations, whose vital interests are closely connected with the geographical, historical, political, cultural and economic conditions.” This was a reference to the republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of Thrace, where different peoples and cultures lived together, and yet demanded independent status within the federation. It must be mentioned that at that time Thrace was treated as a special region and was an important topic in the policies of the Balkan states and great powers. At a certain time it was even constituted as an independent state, of which the Comintern took care in the inter-war period. The same solution as that adopted later at the Second Session of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia was envisaged for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Respecting the principle of self-determination, it was envisaged that in these two republics (owing to their “mixed population”), “[a]utonomous districts and municipalities will be established, where each nationality will enjoy full freedom of its native tongue, faith and customs”.

The programme envisaged that “the official language of each republic will be the language of the majority”. Of particular interest was the provision that the republics were to send their “authorized representatives to the general Federal Parliament”, and that a “Federal Government and a Council which stands in the stead of the President of the Federal Republic” were to be formed from among them. To preserve full equality between the peoples and republics, “the Federal Government and the Council” were to be composed “of an equal number of persons from each federate republic”, and “the Federal Government and the Council” were to “control all general federal internal and external international affairs of the Balkan Republic”.

Accordingly, the concept of this programme, regardless of the fact that it envisaged a Balkan, and not merely a South-Slavic, unification, represented the highest achievement in the democratic federalist thinking among the Macedonians, and not only among them. It was no mere chance that the Macedonian people from all the parts of the divided land lived constantly with these visions in the period between the wars and also during a large part of the Second World War and the National Liberation War. This was **the only way and manner** of achieving the **unification and liberation** of the Macedonian people and of securing **peace and harmony in the Balkans**.

12.

We must not neglect the fact that the Macedonians also considered the idea of a federalist unification of the South Slavs alone, and after the publication of the Corfu Declaration, also of a **federally organized South-Slav (Yugoslav) state**, but with enlarged borders **that included the whole territory of Macedonia**. These were principally the tendencies that appeared within the Macedonian Club in Belgrade, now supported mainly by people from southern Macedonia, the section of the land which was to remain outside the borders of the envisaged state of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

The character of the 'Yugoslav' orientation of the **Corfu Declaration** was clear not only because it proclaimed a "triple" or "three-named" people, but also because the declaration did not invite, or did not even take into consideration, Montenegro and Macedonia as subjects. Pašić's greater-state concept was clear and patronizing, especially with regard to the Macedonians. In his letter of November 3, 1917, he was quite categorical in the formulation of his directives to M. Marinković in the Serbian mission to the Bolsheviks in Russia: "The question of Macedonia should not be allowed to be raised at all. It is a Serbian land..." As a matter of fact, as early as November 11, 1904, Pašić said to Hesapčiev, the Bulgarian chargé d'affaires: "I have decisively opposed the autonomy of Macedonia. I have refused to recognize that there is a third Slavic nationality in the Balkans besides the Serbs and Bulgarians, and accordingly, Macedonian Slavs should not be created in addition to them at any cost. They are either Serbs or Bulgarians. Those sections which lie closer to Serbia and are more exposed to Serbian influence — these are Serbs, and those sections which lie closer to Bulgaria — these are Bulgarians... Finally, I do not think that for the proper development of the Balkan states it is necessary or justified to create a fourth tiny Slavic state."

Yet now Pašić was also upset by the rumours coming from Macedonia, by what was happening among the people, and also by what was taking place in the ranks of the allies.

France was particularly active in the background during the fighting on the **Macedonian Front**. As early as 1916 it founded a **Commercial Bureau** as part of the Command of the Eastern Front, which started publishing its mouthpiece *Bulletin Commercial de Macédoine* (Armée d'Orient — Ravitaillement civil, Bureau commercial). The Commercial Bureau developed extensive activities for the investment of French capital in Macedonia, also founding various **Macedonian-French committees** in many French towns. At the same time, in order to acquaint the French public with the economic, commercial, historical, archaeological and other conditions in Macedonia, the journal *Revue Franco-Macédonienne* was printed in Salonika. A discussion was initiated as to "what to

do with Macedonia after the war, how to organize it, and thus secure a permanent peace in the Balkans, which would enable the safe investment of French capital". An article of February 1, 1917, referring to the fairs and marketplaces in Macedonia, stated that their past memories "are not only of historical interest; they serve to determine what can and should be the future of a land recalling an impressive economic prosperity and whose development has been impeded and slowed down only by recurrent conflicts, wars and devastation. The security which the new status of Europe will bring to Macedonia should enable it to start once again along the road of its own natural development". For: "To prepare the future prosperity of Macedonia means to put an end to the conflicts whose severity was that which disturbed Europe. It is necessary once and for all to extinguish the source of the fire, ready to break out again if we do not guard it."

This and other ideas allow us to conclude that there was indeed a vision to "organize Macedonia after the war as an independent state unit under guarantees from the great powers, based upon the interest of capital". This was even better described by the article entitled 'French Culture in Macedonia', which appeared in *Revue Franco-Macédonienne* in April 1917, where, in addition to "industrial and commercial expansion", the third "item" mentioned was French culture, which, it assessed, was not at the level of "the allotted place which Macedonia should take in French interests in the East, and primarily in the Balkans". Moreover, "[n]o one can deny that it is desirable to turn Macedonia into one of the major French centres". As a matter of fact, there were French educational centres in Macedonia even earlier, especially in Salonika, as "the focus of genuine French culture". The article called for a drawing closer to the Macedonian masses: "Let us learn their language, which is not in contradiction to the efforts we would make to propagate our language. Let us show interest and make them interested in their own life, their own history and land." It was no chance that it recommended the setting up, in Salonika itself, of a "centre for Macedonian studies", which, together with the other institutions in the field of culture, would secure this centre as "the focus of 'Macedonism'".

And yet this was only one side of the complex activity of France in Macedonia. In his research into this question, Ivan Katardžiev has concluded that French political action on the ground was of no lesser scope, especially in 1918. Specialists in various areas were sent (geographers, historians, linguists, etc. from various French universities) to make detailed studies of Macedonia. In April 1918 the French command sent a questionnaire (with 20 questions) to all regional commands, requiring them to describe the real situation on the ground. This did not remain a secret from the Serbian intelligence service and on April 15, 1918 the Ministry of the Interior reported that the Lerin police station had informed them that "a circular has been sent from the Salonika Central Office and the Political

Department of the Staff of the Eastern Army to all French military and police services under the jurisdiction of the Second Bureau. They are required to collect ethnographic, economic, historical, geographical and other information in the territory where the relevant institution is located." Further on it is said that "the chief of the French police in Lerin has asked Professor Miloš Ivković, a distinguished linguist, to help him as an advisor, and the latter has put all the data on the population, customs, history, language, etc. at his disposal. Moreover, he has offered to cooperate with the responsible French officers in the process of collecting information."

Although the directive of the Serbian ministry was not without practical effect on the collection of data, this French study and **historical survey of Macedonia** in the course of "about 20 centuries" (encompassing the state of Philip and Alexander of Macedon and the domination of Rome, Byzantium, Bulgaria, Serbia and Turkey) offers a fairly accurate picture of the circumstances in Macedonia, even though there are also contradictory data and some vague views about the cultural and national situation of the Macedonian people. For example, it mentions: "Bitola, where 5,000 *Slavic* families have long been exposed to the influence of *Bulgarian* propaganda, but speak *Macedonian*"; the town population of Lerin is designated as *Greek*, and the rural population as *Bulgarian*, while in the region comprising the villages of Leskovec, Ajtos, Gorno Kotori and Dolno Kotori "the *Macedonian* element is in the majority"; the population along the Bend of the River Crna is "homogeneous and composed of *Macedonians* of *Serbian descent*, Orthodox in faith", whereas "on the western shores of Prespa most of the inhabitants are *Orthodox Christians* and depend on the Patriarchate", but "their spoken language is a *Macedonian dialect*, written in the Bulgarian and, chiefly, in the Greek alphabet".

This survey upset the Serbian government and propaganda, especially the data that in Macedonia (albeit in some parts only) there lived Macedonians. Great alarm was created by the statements of the French Slavacist **André Vaillant**, second lieutenant in the General Staff, who was given the task "of studying the language situation, customs and monuments in the surroundings of Lerin". In a conversation, Vaillant said among other things: "In Macedonia, both Serbian and Greek, there exists only a Macedonian language, while Serbian customs and culture are indisputable." In a letter dated January 15, 1918, the chief of the office of the police station for state security in Lerin, Jovan Aleksić, wrote to his minister: "I have explained to M. Vaillant, to the best of my ability, that a Macedonian language does not exist, and that we can speak only of a dialect, but M. Vaillant adhered to his assertion." This view of Vaillant's was also confirmed in the letter of the Commissariat and Security Service in Lerin of May 3, 1918, to the responsible Serbian Security Service in Salonika; he told Aleksić again: "After this war the

1913 borders of the Balkan states will not be retained, but the Slavic areas (including the Slavic areas in Greek territory) will be grouped within Yugoslavia, which Bulgaria, too, will later have to join". Aleksić added that "M. Vaillant firmly stands on the position that the Macedonian Slavs, according to their culture and tradition, are not Bulgarians, even though he believes there are certain similarities between the Macedonian language and the Bulgarian language". Hence it was not surprising that the French officers, upon saying goodbye to the peasants, urged them "to preserve their Slavonic mother tongue".

All this shows that shortly before the end of the war, France already had a definite **picture of the ethnic culture and aspirations of the Macedonians**, and also of the true situation on the ground, which, understandably enough, worried the Serbian occupation authorities in southern Macedonia and Pašić's government on Corfu.

13.

Similar information, however, was received concerning the views and actions of the **British** and **Italians** in Macedonia. On February 22, 1918, Infantry Major Dr M. Petrović reported that "the English are greatly interested in the historical descent of our population in Macedonia and in its current national feeling", and that the interest of the British was "by far the greatest". For instance, the London University Professor **Dr Simpson**, who worked in the British hospital in Kremen, "was engaged in the study of the *language* and the question of the *nationality* of the Macedonians", and "had a whole collection of data which he had gathered from his patients". His work was continued by **Mary Stewart**, who replaced him, whereas Miss Campbell, who provided food for the children in the village of Dobroveni, "in reference to the language of the local population as well as their nationality, has never said anything but: 'Macedonians; I do not speak Serbian, I speak Macedonian'".

Serbian reporters were seriously worried because "the English, French and Italians (earlier more often, and now more rarely) go into the villages of Skočivar, Dobroveni and Bač, and under the pretext of taking pictures, or for other reasons, they come into contact with the local population and ask questions about the language and nationality". The Serbs were even more upset to hear that "the allied officers have **books about Macedonia** in their hands, issued by the ministries of the military, which, just like the studies carried out, do not favour the aspirations of the Serbian government". As a result, as early as April 1, 1918, Nikola Pašić instructed Milenko Vesnić in Paris "to react most energetically against such views — with all the means and data he has at his disposal", demanding that the French

government **ban such publications or revise them** “in favour of the Serbian thesis”. Pašić demanded of the Belgrade professors Aleksandar Belić, Jovan Cvijić and others that they prepare publications in favour of Serbian policy and that the High Command send representatives to the allies who “will not consider the language of the Macedonians a part of the Bulgarian language only because they do not speak the Podrinje-Bosnian dialect”.

On April 24, 1918, the Serbian High Command sent a circular to frustrate “the wrong and, for us, damaging views of the national models of the Macedonian population”, and among other things, “to pay serious attention in the choice of persons who serve as interpreters and liaison staff with the French, English and Italians. The appropriate persons, in addition to the command of the language, should be able to give reports and know precisely the differences between the Serbian and Bulgarian languages, and also, if possible, know the characteristics of the Macedonian population, and its dialect, which they must not include within the Bulgarian language, only because it is different from the Podrinje-Bosnian dialect, because the birthplace of the Serbian language was Old Serbia.”

All this made the High Command of the Serbian Army address, on June 28, 1918, its Minister of the Military with concrete proposals presented in four points, concluding that it was necessary “to create a unity in our own doctrine concerning Macedonia and the Macedonian question”, because “at present there is no such unity of doctrine either in our scholarship or in public opinion”, as a result of which it was necessary to gather, in Salonika, “the well-known national activists” to formulate “our views and determine our aspirations”. Once established as binding on all, this “would be spread by every possible means”, and the whole would be directed by a single person who would be relieved of any other obligations. This implied that shortly **before the end of the war, Serbia still had no definite and consistent vision of the destiny of Macedonia**, even though the Serbian government endeavoured in principle to incorporate that part of Macedonia granted in accordance with the Treaty of Bucharest within its territory.

Accordingly, **the ‘Yugoslav idea’ was only an optional concept in the spectrum of Serbian greater-state interests**, which ignored the Macedonian people and refused to listen to its prominent representatives abroad. Hence the Minister of the Military was swift to accept the suggestions of the High Command and, in his letter to the president of the Serbian government on Corfu, of July 1, 1918, he copied almost verbatim the four points, adding a fifth that enumerated the persons who were supposed to form the commission which would work out the proposed paper for Serbian propaganda in Macedonia.

On the 27th of the same month, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a letter to the Serbian envoy to Paris, emphasized its “uniform, clear and precise” view “on the national and political demands” for acquainting the French, British and

Americans “with our ethnic and historical rights”, i.e. “with our ethnographic borders and our goals in this bloody struggle”. The following instructions were given:

With the purpose of making it possible, at least from now on, for our writers and journalists as well as ordinary citizens to have consistent and definite views in private conversations of the ethnographic borders of our people, and also of our other ethnographic, ethnic and national questions, it is my honour, Mr Envoy, to invite the professors of our university, Dr Cvijić, Dr Belić, Dr Đerić, Dr Radonjić and Dr Stanojević, and request them together to draw up the ethnographic borders of our three-named people in all the regions, paying special attention to the borderline with the Bulgarians and Greeks, where the most frequent errors are being made.

14.

Yet more and more information arrived concerning the **opinion of the Macedonians themselves** about their future following the war. Serbian representatives could also feel this. It was not by chance that as early as the spring of 1918 the allies started once more to use the ‘Macedonian question’ and Bulgaria’s aspirations on the approaching end of the war. As a result, on March 2, 1918, the Serbian diplomatic representative in London, Jovan Jovanović, proposed to his government that it should not only leave nothing to Bulgaria under any condition, but that it should accept the border line of 1912 and demand that the people from the “disputed zone” vote in a referendum whether they wanted to go with the Serbs or Bulgarians. What is particularly interesting, Jovanović suggested that “autonomy be proposed for Macedonia (the old vilayets — Bitola and Salonika — the latter without the Veles district)”, and that “the question be put before scholarly arbitration or before a mixed special commission”.

It is interesting that as early as 1917, in the negotiations with the Entente concerning a separate peace with Bulgaria through the mediation of the Exarchate metropolitan Stephen, it was agreed that “Macedonia should be proclaimed an autonomous region with Salonika as its capital, under the protectorship of America”. A similar proposal was made by the Macedonian Bombolov in London, in July 1918, for the autonomy of Macedonia, and the idea was accepted favourably by the British as well.

In August 1918, special representatives of the American president Wilson arrived in Bitola to become acquainted with the ethnography of the population on the spot. Here we must take into account the claims of Greece which were expressed through several concrete actions in Macedonia. Pašić’s minimal and maximal claims to Macedonia from April that year seemed to be called into question. Coming out against “the public discussion of the Macedonian question”,

Jovanović was categorical that “for us it does not exist”. Recommending that any such discussion should be ignored, he wrote: “By discussing it now, we ourselves admit that it has not been settled.”

In this situation, it is of essential significance to determine what the attitude of the Macedonian people was concerning this question. We still do not have sufficient archive materials available to us. Yet even from the sources of Serbian representatives in the occupied territory at that time it can be seen that “there is some secret agitation which is spreading ideas of some Macedonian nationality”. The Serbian agent in the Voden police station made it clear: “The peasants, and especially the children, say that they are Macedonians”, and the chief of the local Lerin division, Jovan Aleksić, testified that “among the women there have been vigorous discussions about the autonomy of Macedonia which would come very soon”. The Serbian government became fully aware that Macedonia might even be supported by the allies as a separate national entity or that Serbia might lose it altogether — “if we fail to re-conquer it with armed force and before the end of the war”. Therefore, all the forces were concentrated on the Macedonian Front and the first territory “regained” was indeed Macedonia. They had in mind that as early as January 1918, the Briton Arthur Evans had proposed the establishment of “a single state with administrative autonomies”, suggesting “Skopje (for the Macedonian regions)” as the centre of Macedonia. Furthermore, the vice-president of the National Council of the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, Dr Ante Pavelić, in early November expressed the position of his Croatian Party of Rights that they understood the provisions of the Corfu Declaration in such a way that “the future state would consist of separate autonomous regions” (although “not delineated by nationality, but by geographical appellations”), where Macedonia was envisaged as one of those separate autonomous regions.

15.

The ‘autonomist’ movement in Macedonia, which already had a comparatively long history, became the kernel of Macedonian national liberation ideology and action. With the approach of the end of the war this platform was becoming more and more prominent. Some of the more rational Serbian officers on the Macedonian Front noticed this. In order to thwart Bulgarian aspirations in the future peace bargaining and to secure Macedonia’s incorporation, together with Serbia, within the future ‘South-Slav’ (Yugoslav) state, they even prepared a special declaration to the Serbian government as a supplement to the Corfu Declaration referring to Macedonia. It reached M. Trifunović, Minister in Pašić’s government, who sent a cable, on August 11, 1918, to the Minister of the Interior on the island of Corfu:

I have understood that a movement about Macedonia has appeared here for its becoming a member of the Yugoslav community and demanding from the government that the Corfu Declaration encompass the whole of Macedonia as an individual 'South-Slav people'. Because Professor Grigorije Hadžitašković and Dr Čeda Đurđević have been designated as leaders of this movement, I have demanded reports from both of them. Hadžitašković says that the initiative was started by Đurđević and that he agrees with the idea and intends to support it, if the government gives approval. Đurđević admits that he is the promoter of the idea, and justifies it with the need for Macedonian intellectuals, using the slogan that the Macedonians are 'South Slavs', in accordance with the theory of Cvijić and Belić, to smash the propaganda of the Bulgarians and friends of Bulgaria that the Macedonians are Bulgarians; this would prevent Macedonia's going to the Bulgarians, and it can be incorporated into Yugoslavia, like Croatia and Slovenia. I pointed out to Mr Đurđević, a medical colonel, that he had made a wrong step which, even as an idea, may harm our interests, and recommended to him that he cease all activities. He said that he did not intend to undertake anything until he receives the opinion and approval of the government. Yet he had already written a declaration which was submitted to certain persons for their opinions. According to my investigation, a month ago, in a group which included General Vasić and medical major Miloš Popović, Mr Đurđević claimed that in our dispute with the Bulgarians on the question of the ethnic character of the Macedonians, the most accurate was the opinion of Dr Cvijić. The same was the opinion of Hadžitašković, who claims that it has been established by scholarship that the ethnic character of Macedonia was neither Serbian nor Bulgarian, but Slavic. Accordingly, I believe that this movement is unwholesome and harmful, that it has met with disapproval from the Macedonian champions and that it should be stopped. With this in mind, I have already taken steps and we believe that the government should also issue an order, and even start formal investigations. Mr Đurđević claims that, in addition to the entire documentation he has sent here, special documentation will follow in another cable, after which, he believes, Mr Pašić will approve his action.

We do not know much about that "special documentation" which was to explain the action of the Declaration's authors, but this must have referred, primarily, to the conviction and feeling of the Macedonian people themselves and to the position of the allies on this question. Highly illustrative here was the statement of Grigorije Hadžitašković, who once again, as in 1904/1905, spoke about the individual ethnic character of the Macedonians, as a result of which he insisted on them being fully incorporated into the new state as a separate Slavic entity. This concept sprang from both the ordinary people and the intelligentsia of the population, and hence the Declaration was not made in the name of the Serbian military command, but "in the name of the Macedonians (Macedonian Slavs), those within the borders of Serbia as well as those beyond it". This exceptionally important document declared:

One. No one denies that the Macedonians (Macedonian Slavs) are a South-Slav people, and this is the feeling of all Macedonians without distinction.

Two. As a South-Slav people, we show solidarity with all Yugoslav [South-Slav] aspirations and accept the Corfu Declaration of 1917. We wish and request that the Corfu Declaration be supplemented by encompassing the whole of Slav Macedonia and all Macedonians.

Three. Accordingly, we accept unity with all other South-Slavs, on the basis of democratic organization, headed by the Karađorđević dynasty.

Four. Hence we, the Macedonians, also wish to have our own representatives in the Yugoslav Committee, and appeal to the Committee to enlarge its structure, accepting Macedonian representatives from outside the borders of Serbia, in the same way as representatives from the other regions outside the borders of Serbia have been included in the Committee.

This Declaration was undoubtedly one of the strongest indications concerning the understanding of the “Yugoslav idea” by the Macedonians. It was not formulated only by Hadžitašković, though he could not be reconciled to the idea that his native Voden would remain outside the borders of the future state. It was not by chance that Voden was indicated as the place where this document was written in late July 1918. **The Declaration started from the distinct ethnic identity of the Macedonians and demanded special treatment for the entire Macedonian people**, as was the case with “the other regions outside the borders of Serbia”. These views were not essentially different from those upheld by the Macedonian Revolutionary Committee and the St Petersburg Society, regardless of the fact that they advocated a Balkan federation and this declaration favoured a South-Slav federation. That it envisaged the same type of federal community is shown by Hadžitašković’s personal statements.

Immediately after receiving and studying Trifunović’s cable and the text of the Voden Declaration, the acting Foreign Minister, Dr Milan Gavrilović, invited not Đurđević but Hadžitašković himself to Corfu to explain the document. In the discussion which lasted for two hours and after the presentation of the **Promemoria on the manner of resolving the status of Macedonia in the envisaged state**, on September 1, 1918, a written version was demanded from Hadžitašković, which he only finished as late as September 19, 1918 (as he became ill in the meantime). Both versions of the Promemoria have been preserved and they explain and expand the Voden Declaration in many aspects.

Grigorije Hadžitašković’s South-Slav concept today sounds very modern. It was superior to the concept of the Yugoslav Committee, let alone the unitarist concept of Pašić’s government, where Macedonia was not even mentioned. In order to demonstrate that the Voden Declaration was not an isolated view of individual Serbian officers, but the expression of the aspirations of the Macedonian people, we would like to quote some of the basic points in this extensive Promemoria.

Hadžitašković reported that “around mid-July” he was invited by Medical Colonel Dr Vljako Popović to the Serbian hospital in Salonika, where he met Medical Colonel Dr Čeda Đurđević for the first time and was acquainted with the already formulated declaration on Macedonia. The basic concept of the document, according to Hadžitašković, was “to proclaim the Macedonian people as an individual South-Slav people which would be included as such within the framework of the Yugoslav [South-Slav] state”. It was intended that the Declaration be signed (probably by a larger number of supporters of this ideology in Macedonia) and later a representative of the Macedonians be sent to the Yugoslav Committee in order **to amend the Corfu Declaration** in the spirit of this concept. The idea, believed Hadžitašković, “is only the logical conclusion of our view on the ethnography of the Macedonian Slavs, as it has been publicly disseminated, and in this way the Macedonians would be politically even more strongly linked to Serbia”. This would also be accepted by the allies and would be in the spirit of Wilson’s Fourteen Points concerning world peace.

It is interesting to note Hadžitašković’s response in connection with the activity of the initiator, Dr Đurđević, who in 1895-1897 was sent by Serbian propaganda as a physician to Skopje. Đurđević himself said that “he has long dealt with this question, having spent whole two years on propaganda in Skopje; that now he has undertaken this activity without consultations with the government, but that he has reasons to believe that at least two or three members of the government maintain the same position; he invited me,” writes Hadžitašković in the Promemoria, “because he has heard that I am considered as an ideologist of this question among the Macedonian intelligentsia”.

Hadžitašković also mentioned his autonomist and confederalistic activity of 12 years earlier and wrote that he had met Dr Đurđević four times in Salonika, also giving him “data included in the memorandum”. At the same time he talked to his “friends amongst the Macedonian intelligentsia” and “all those to whom I spoke fully approved of my view”, but owing to the special circumstances of war and the sensitivity of the question, everyone demanded first to hear the opinion of the Serbian government and then to sign the document. “If the government takes that position,” says he, “it can convene a conference and open a discussion there”. For, “as far as the Macedonians are concerned, this question is of particular significance, and it must be precisely defined”. Hadžitašković tried to justify his action concerning the Declaration with the danger of “the Macedonian question being settled on a different basis from the settlement of the Peace of Bucharest”, as in Salonika there were already rumours “of negotiations between the allies and Bulgaria for a separate peace”. Even though the Serbian diplomat and journalist Živojin Balugdžić told him: “We have a promise on the part of the allies for the restoration of Serbia, and accordingly the Macedonian question does not exist for

us,” Hadžitašković nevertheless pointed to the serious claims by the Bulgarians and even by the allied Greeks to “that fully Slavic Macedonia”, and at that crucial historical moment he again put forward the thesis “on the ethnography of the Macedonian Slavs”, which was “a formula for a Yugoslav [South-Slav] Macedonia within the framework of the Yugoslav state”, i.e. “recognition of the individuality of the Macedonians and of Macedonia within the borders of the Yugoslav state”. This would entail the following:

(1) It recognizes the ethnic individuality of the Macedonians which has developed in the course of centuries: even if this people was formerly not ethnically a separate South-Slav people, it has gradually become such owing to its geographical and historical destiny, forming part at different times of one or another Balkan state, and thus acquiring its own individuality.

(2) It would comprise the whole of Macedonia, that means also Bulgarian and Greek, within its geographical and ‘moral’ if not ethnic borders; indeed all Macedonians feel themselves to be a single moral whole.

(3) This formula also resolves the question of southern, Greek, Macedonia, the cradle of general Slavic racial consciousness: by any other formula, the one-thousand-year-old Slavic character of that nursery of all Slavonic literature and culture would be condemned to ruin, and this would be an eternal source of remorse for the entire Slavic race.

(4) This formula, satisfying the autonomist aspirations of all aware Macedonians – in the spirit of which they have been brought up for twenty years – would attract all Macedonians to the Yugoslav [South-Slav] idea, not only those from Greek Macedonia, but also, which is of enormous importance, those from America and Bulgaria, who would be invited to return to their hearths: thus an impenetrable front would be built vis-à-vis Bulgaria, which would permanently separate it from Macedonia... And this Yugoslav community, in the light of history and sociological laws, will either be federal – or it may never come into being.

Hadžitašković left it to the Serbian government to decide whether it was possible for “Serbia today to have the moral force to make such a generous and also profound statesmanlike gesture, to recognize these principles”, and also pointed to the following arguments “supporting this thesis”:

(5) First of all, an argument of high moral value: this formula will put an end to a painful anomaly – the sons of one and the same people, often from one and the same family, being divided into four nationalities: Macedonians, Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks.

(6) Then an argument of intellectual honesty: it will help the study of Macedonia to return to its true ground, to the ground of objective research and examination, with no ulterior motives or biased claims.

(7) In the political respect, the advantages of this formula would include the following:

(a) It will finally resolve the complicated Macedonian question, and on the most democratic basis at that, in accordance with the political ideology and military goals

of the allies and America: by this thesis we would indeed have all the allies on our side, including president Wilson.

(b) Macedonia will forever be separated from Bulgaria.

(c) Serbia will secure itself access to Salonika and the Aegean Sea without a new war: it will thus resolve, without a new war, a historical problem it is forced to resolve by mere geographical necessity; even the Greeks themselves see and publicly highlight that necessity. (See the book *Greek-Slavic Borders*, p. 10).

(d) Bulgaria, making a separate peace and declaring that it accepts Wilson's principles, hopes that it will nevertheless gain something, if nothing else, because of the name 'Bulgarian' by which, even according to Cvijić, the Macedonians call themselves; we should outwit them in this by taking the name Macedonian and giving that name its full content, at the expense of its links with the Bulgarian nationality.

These considerations and concrete proposals by Grigorije Hadžitašković represented a step forward in the discovery of the national identity and historical prospects in the development of the Macedonian people in comparison with his views and actions of 1905. He himself admitted that he had done this "in full freedom of thought and conscience", presenting the "scholarly, moral and political arguments in favour of this thesis... guided solely by the love of truth, as it has presented itself to me on the basis of study of the history of the Balkan peoples, on the basis of extensive reading and thinking and on the basis of full knowledge of the psychology of the Macedonians", at the same time fully convinced that "any other solution will be harmful for Serbian interests and peace in the Balkans". Starting from the premise that at the moment "when cultural superiority and tolerance, which are the traits of both culture and power, should be the chief factors in the establishment of a state", Hadžitašković ended the Promemoria by pointing out that "there is no place for narrow-mindedness in a large state; as both the individuals and the regions have their own individual moral life which must be respected, and efforts should be made not to destroy individualities but to bring them into agreement, so that everyone can breathe with the same political will. The power of Great Britain and America is based on this principle. In this respect, the Macedonians have certain psychological characteristics which will not be damaging to the general state and social life, but on the contrary: unrestrained, both politically and morally, the Macedonians will develop their personal and ethnic faculties and will thus make a contribution of their own to the common Serbian and South-Slav culture."

At the request of the Minister, Hadžitašković made a brief summary of this Promemoria, introducing some new elements which are not uninteresting if we wish to have a complete picture of his views and actions. Despite pointing out that the implementation of this "formula" would depend on "political opportuneness", the author insisted on turning "the present *defensive*" into "an *offensive* formula" of Serbian policy, because not only the Bulgarians but also the Greeks had

conducted “an offensive policy”. For this reason he proposed: “This offensive formula would encompass the whole of Macedonia, both Bulgarian and Greek, with Salonika at the head. Everyone today, including Senegalese and Indian soldiers on the Macedonian Front, have realized that Greek Macedonia is in fact Slavic, South-Slavic Macedonia — even though not everyone knows that it was the cradle of Slavonic racial consciousness and the first fountain of Slavonic literature and culture.” Emphasizing that this “formula... can gather around itself all Macedonians, wherever they may be and whatever they may have chosen”, he proposed that “careful and diplomatic action should also be taken among the Macedonians in Greece, Bulgaria and America, and also among the Jews and Turks in Salonika”. He also proposed that, “if possible”, “at least one intelligent Macedonian be sent to the capitals of the allies who would work at an appropriate post in the Yugoslav Committee. The same should be done in Bern and Geneva”, quoting a comprehensive list of seven Macedonian intellectuals as candidates for these posts, from among the fifty or so people mentioned in the longer version of the text.

In a nutshell, Grigorije Hadžitašković (together with his adherents and people sharing the same ideas) proposed to the Serbian government a **Yugoslav concept** for the future common state, where Macedonia was to be an **individual region within the federal community**, and the Macedonians were to be recognized as a **distinct nation and culture, side by side with the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes**. The Declaration and Promemoria, however, were not accepted by Pašić’s government. Moreover, they were not even the subject of special analysis by the responsible institutions and bodies. The ‘Macedonian question’ continued not to exist for Serbia and the Macedonians were treated as being Serbs.

16.

Such were the views of the Macedonians who fought in the First World War on the side of Serbia. This was a direct reflection of the feelings and aspirations of the people in Macedonia itself. Moreover, the positions of other Macedonians who lived as émigrés, even of those who were ready to take the policy of Bulgaria into consideration, were similar. Amidst the storm of the world war, the **Macedonian associations in Switzerland** developed particularly significant activities. They were founded towards the end of the 19th century, emerged in public immediately following the Ilinden Uprising, and became especially active after 1915, playing a very important part in the period of the **Peace Conference at Versailles**.

At the head of this activity was the privatdozent of the Medical School in Geneva, **Dr Anastas Kocarev** (from Ohrid). In the autumn of 1915 he founded

the **Academic Society Macedonia** (Geneva), and towards the end of that year the Macedonian students at Zurich University set up the **Political Society Macedonia to Macedonians**. Early 1916 saw the foundation of the **Political Society Macedonia — For the Defence of the Rights of Macedonians**, and in the same period another Macedonian association was established in Geneva: the **Political Society for the Independence of Macedonia**. All this took place at a time when Macedonia was almost completely under the occupation of Bulgaria and cannot be considered a result of Bulgarian policy and propaganda. These were associations whose concepts were directed against the aggressive appetites of all the Balkan monarchies, including the aspirations of Bulgaria.

Their activity became particularly strong after the start of peace negotiations. For example, in July 1919, a second Macedonian society was formed in Lausanne that bore the name *Vardar* and promoted the slogan ‘Macedonia to the Macedonians’, and there were similar associations in Bern, Zurich and Neuchâtel. For the purpose of being more effective after the end of the First World War and especially following the proclamation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, when it became clear that the partition of Macedonia and the triple subjugation of the Macedonians seriously threatened to become an accomplished fact with international guarantees, on December 15, 1918, representatives from the three strongest Macedonian societies (in Lausanne, Geneva and Zurich) elected a joint managing body whom they called a **General Council of the Macedonian Societies in Switzerland**, which was active for nearly a year.

Both the Serbian and Bulgarian sides made attempts, from the very outset, to infiltrate the Macedonian societies in Switzerland and to influence the programmatic orientation of the Macedonians from within. As early as March 1917 the Serbian historian and politician, Jovan N. Tomić, reported that Dr Anastas Kocarev in Geneva “has penetrated among our young people and there spreads the idea of a Balkan confederation with autonomy for individual provinces”. He also gave a public lecture in this spirit. In the next year the **Society of Macedonians for the Independence of Macedonia**, Geneva, issued an appeal to the Macedonians, where, among other things, it was stated: “Macedonia and its people represent a single entity pitifully divided by the unjustified rivalry of neighbouring states... Macedonia does not belong either to the Bulgarians, or the Greeks, or the Serbs, it belongs to the Macedonians. Macedonia to the Macedonians.” Therefore they propagated the slogan: “Long live *independent Macedonia!*”, even though they had a **federalist concept**. Starting from the Swiss state-constitutional organization, the objectives of the society were: “(1) to inform, in the correct manner, public opinion on the Macedonian question, and (2) to work on the establishment of an independent Macedonia and its organization into a federal state.”

Serbian diplomacy not only regularly informed its government concerning these actions by the Macedonians, but also tried to act inside these associations by using hired instruments from the Macedonian community. For example, it used the Central Committee of the Serb-Croat-Slovene University Youth in Switzerland, which issued a public protest against the demands of the Macedonians “to allow the Macedonian people to decide freely on its destiny”. Greek academic societies in Switzerland issued similar statements. The key element was the principle of national self-determination in the spirit of the Fourteen Points of the United States President Wilson. The objective of the General Council of the Macedonian Societies in Switzerland was formulated in this way even in its ‘Founding act’: “To demand the implementation of the principles of president Wilson and the Entente powers, i.e. to make it possible for the Macedonian population to control freely its own destiny, as it has been made possible for the other subjugated peoples.” It was no chance that, from the very first meeting of this council, cables were sent to president Wilson and the heads of the French, British and Italian governments. The General Council not only promptly reacted with letters, cables, memoranda and bulletins, but it also sent delegates to the congresses of the Second Socialist International in Bern and Lucerne, and to the International Conference of the League of Nations in Bern, and also made several attempts to send a three-member delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris. In this connection, of particular significance was the **Memorandum** sent to the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, the United States of America, France, Italy and Belgium, and also to the Socialist International and others who might be “interested in our cause”. This document proposed the following basic points for the settlement of the Macedonian question:

- (1) Military occupation of Macedonia exclusively by the British, French, American and Italian armies;
- (2) Provisional assignment of the country’s administration to the Macedonian population, under the control of the occupation troops composed as stated above;
- (3) Return of all Macedonian émigrés to Macedonia, regardless of faith and party, free to participate in the renewal of the country.

Trying to secure support for their cause, in addition to seeking it from prominent politicians, social figures, professors and writers, the Macedonians in Switzerland established direct contacts with various Macedonian organizations and societies abroad and even with the **Central Committee of the Macedonians in America**. Thus they acted not only as representatives of “the Macedonians in Switzerland” but also of “those in the United States of America”, affirming the General Council as an institution “constituted from an organized body of 50,000

young people who correspond with over 250,000 people from Macedonia". Therefore the **Appeal to the Civilized World Pro Macedonia**, issued by the General Council of the Macedonian Societies in Switzerland, Lausanne, June 1919, among other things, stated:

The most recent and the most painful of the Macedonian Martyrdoms is the Balkan Wars. That first Balkan Alliance which took as its principal condition a sacred crusade for freeing Macedonia from the Turkish secular oppressor, alas, only ended by proving the corruption of our neighbours' diplomacy, who only aimed at the sharing of Macedonia.

Through the ultimatum addressed to the Sublime Porte in the autumn of 1912, the Balkan Allies demanded the autonomy of Macedonia. This was nothing but an artifice to deceive the Macedonians; for between the diplomats of Sofia and Belgrade, between Belgrade and Athens, secret treaties stipulated the sharing of Macedonia in three parts among them.

This was the starting point of the fratricidal wars between the same allies and it is precisely this crime, this coarse mistake of Balkan diplomacy which has become the core, the centre of the misfortunes and sufferings of the Macedonian people.

The nefarious Treaty of Bucharest (1913) is there to show the deceitful ways of this diplomacy. Without consulting the Macedonian people, our neighbours disposed of us as if they had been our masters and proceeded with wretched mercantile transactions at the expense of our country only to gratify their thirst for conquest.

The Appeal from Lausanne, like the appeals and memoranda of 1913 and 1914 from St Petersburg, called upon "the civilized world" to offer a fair helping hand in the decisive moment following the world war disaster:

Has not then Macedonia, our beloved country, any right to your help? Cannot the Macedonians, divided into several dissected parts, utter a shriek of distress? The tragedy of their existence does not even allow them to offer, as they would like to, the sacrifice of their lives for their country's sake. Most happy Belgians, Czechs and Slovaks, Poles, Slovenes, Armenians, Syrians, etc., you, upon whom humanity had such pity, so justly deep, we envy you; you had the honour of being able to die for your country, even that we do not have...

Must Macedonia, as a victim of the competition among her neighbours, be counted as a belligerent? No! It is a neutral country; however, it is laid waste; it calls for justice before the whole world!

At the moment when "all honest consciences" and "all minds anxious as to what humanity will become" demanded that "the free decision of nations should be respected", the Appeal declared:

We, Macedonians, demand that this intangible right should be respected also when Macedonia is at stake. The Macedonians have the necessary and indispensable faculties to be able to govern themselves; for they are neither an amorphous mass, nor an unaware entity as many an interested writer wishes to assert. Quite the

contrary, under this apparent chaos is hidden a unity of souls resting on unshakable psychological bonds such as: revolutions followed en masse, common sufferings and pains under the very same yoke. One of the main bonds of this unity of souls is precisely that sublime abnegation of the mass of the Macedonian people for the sake of the independence of their land, which has produced at all times heroes, apostles and martyrs.

After describing all this in their Appeal, the signatories of the General Council of the Macedonian Societies in Switzerland specified their concrete demands (with explanations) which are of particular significance for our subject:

We assert our right to live (as a nation) and for the last time we underline the wish of the great majority of Macedonians which is summed up thus: Macedonia's independence with a cantonal administration, after the style of democratic Switzerland and under the protectorship of one of the disinterested great powers: the United States of America. For those who know Macedonia and the appetites of the Balkan States, it will not be difficult to understand that we are trying to obtain thus four solutions:

I. In making an independent state of Macedonia, its tearing between the Balkan States will come to an end forever, the Macedonian people will cease to be the object of commercial transactions between its neighbours.

II. The cantonal administration copied from democratic Switzerland which we plan to introduce in our country will secure for all minorities, without distinction of languages or religions, an absolute intellectual equality to develop themselves economically.

III. The protectorship of Macedonia by one of the great powers is indispensable, so that the intrigues of the corrupt diplomacy of the Balkan States can be thwarted in the future.

IV. Once free and independent, Macedonia, thanks to its excellent geographical situation, will act as a uniting factor between the Balkan States and will allow them at last to meet otherwise than bearing arms and thus contribute to the realization of the Balkan Confederation.

On the basis of these demands, the Macedonians anxiously awaited from the 'ville lumière' "the solemn proclamation of our right to live and the changing of our country into a Switzerland in the Balkans". They were firmly convinced that "Macedonia will obtain your help; for parcelled out and subdued, she has never denied her glorious past; she will never cease to struggle against brute force, nor to loudly assert a free nations' sacred rights". If, however, "in contempt of all justice, our unfortunate country were yet thrown as a prey to be shared out, or to the imperialist folly of our neighbours, they would but lengthen the period of troubles and insecurity which has reigned in the Balkans as long as Macedonia has been oppressed".

This orientation of the Macedonians was also strengthened by Point 11 of Wilson's Fourteen Points which stipulated:

Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the

several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

The Macedonian émigré community in the United States, in its own right, emerged as an important factor before the international public. These Macedonians (“more than 100,000” people) organized “huge rallies” in Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, New York and other large American cities, where they decided to establish contacts with the General Council of the Macedonian Societies in Switzerland, and to “authorize it to represent the interests of the whole nation”. As a result, on April 7, 1919, the following **telegram** was sent to the General Council, signed by a Central Committee member, Banev: “The Central Macedonian Committee in the United States of America gives you unlimited authorization to represent our cause before the Peace Conference in Paris.”

After rendering its programme even more precise, and following significant personal changes inside the General Council itself — since in the meantime the activity of the Bulgarian diplomatic office in Bern had intensified — the session of the General Council on May 2, 1919 examined “the question of the possible choice of a disinterested power for the protectorship of Macedonia”. Assessing that France would be inappropriate in this matter (owing to “its alliance with Serbia and Greece”), as also would be Italy (as “it undoubtedly favours the interests of the Bulgarian government and pulls the land towards new political unrest”), the Council concluded: “The huge emigration of Macedonians to America, where they have been received as brothers, and this country’s disinterestedness in the Balkans, make us unanimously put our choice on the United States of America as the protecting power over independent Macedonia to secure our economic and political freedom.”

In an attempt “not to offend the sensibilities of Great Britain, as it has always shown concern over the Macedonian question, and as our land hopes [to find] a good friend even in the British Parliament”, it was decided first to send a cable to president Wilson and the Senate of the United States in Washington requesting them “to accept the protectorship of Macedonia”, and “if America, owing to its constitutional provisions, rejects this mandate, we would request Great Britain to take in hand the destiny of unfortunate Macedonia”. Following this line, a cable was also sent, on May 23, 1919, to the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, expressing the hope of the Macedonians that if the United States, “owing to the provisions of its constitution”, could give an affirmative answer, he would support their demand and “contribute to the just and righteous settlement of the Macedonian problem with the establishment of an independent Macedonia, the only radical solution which will lead to permanent peace in the Near East for all times”.

In the same spirit, the General Council of the Macedonian Societies in Switzerland sent a telegram to a member of the American delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, Edward House, as well as to the Peace Conference itself. Of particular interest and significance were also the contacts between the Macedonians and an American professor in Geneva, **Dr George Herron**, who told them: "From what I have understood, you are not demanding an eternal protectorship by some power which would exploit Macedonia, but on the contrary, you are demanding a provisional protectorship until the moment your country becomes fully able to govern itself, and this protectorship and this moral and material support can be provided for you only by America."

At the session of July 8, Dr Anastas Kocarev read an express letter from Professor Herron, asking Kocarev to call him urgently in order to let him know that Colonel House had sent a telegram saying that "the Macedonian question will be taken into consideration and that the Macedonians have the same right to independence as the Poles, Armenians, Czechs and Slovaks, etc." At the same time, Herron advised Kocarev that "the Macedonians in Switzerland must establish a National Council of their members among whom there must figure one American, one Briton and one Italian".

But the discussion concerning "the establishment of a National Council and the proclamation of the independence of Macedonia" led to serious friction within the General Council itself, as the Appeal to the Civilized World Pro Macedonia had "a bad effect in Bulgarian diplomatic circles in Bern", as a result of which "several members" of the General Council were invited to Bern and given "suggestions" as to how to act in line with Bulgarian policy, or even discontinue their activity in the General Council.

But in spite of all the Bulgarian endeavours and pressures, in spite of Serbian and Greek intrigues and attacks, and even with its new management, the **General Council of the Macedonian Societies in Switzerland** continued its activity up to the signing of the peace treaties in Versailles and Neuilly. They discussed renaming the General Council as the **Macedonian General Council in Switzerland**, organizing rallies and conferences on Macedonia in Switzerland and setting up a **Macedonian Press Bureau**, but of all these plans only three important issues of the journal *L'Indépendance Macédonienne* were published (as the mouthpiece of the Lausanne Council), together with some other significant materials that reflected the attitude of the Macedonian intelligentsia towards the peace talks concerning Macedonia. Thus, for example, the protest of a group of Macedonian students from the *Macedonia* Society in Geneva, published on November 8, 1919, in *La Tribune de Genève*, was written in a warning tone:

The Macedonian people, like many other oppressed peoples, has awaited the liberation of its own land from the Peace Conference. Yet this hope has now vanished; the Peace Conference, in accordance with the peace with Bulgaria, divides Macedonia among its three neighbours, contrary to the principle of the self-determination of peoples.

We strongly protest against the partition of our own land and declare that we shall not accept any solution without the free consultation of the Macedonian people concerning the destiny of its own land.

The solution the Macedonian people demanded was the raising of Macedonia to an independent state, organizing it after the example of Switzerland, and under the protectorship of one of the disinterested powers.

By dividing Macedonia, the Peace Conference takes a heavy responsibility upon itself for new conflicts and new wars which will break out in the Balkans.

The Macedonian people, that has lived since 1912 under the horrible oppression, one after another, of Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian authority, will no longer tolerate a life of suffering which, as it seems, the Peace Conference perpetuates for it. We are firmly determined to continue our struggle by all means possible for the independence of Macedonia.

These pronouncements were very similar to the protests and appeals of the Macedonian Colony in St Petersburg/Petrograd at the time of the Balkan Wars, which accurately predicted the history of the Balkans and Europe. Disappointed and deeply hurt, but not losing faith, the Macedonians once again came out strongly against the neighbouring monarchies and, in particular, against Bulgaria.

Following “the alarming news in the press that Bulgarian diplomats had demanded in their counter-proposals at the Peace Conference that the Macedonians should opt for Bulgarian nationality, and that, accordingly, they were far from the thought of renouncing Macedonia”, a three-member delegation from the General Council visited the Bulgarian Prime Minister **Stambolijski** in the National Hotel, Geneva, where he told them that “his policy aims to improve the destiny of the Macedonians through the proceedings in Paris in order to save the property of those who would return to Macedonia as Bulgarian subjects from sequestration” and that “he was able to do nothing more than to conform to the provisions referring to the rights of minorities”.

The delegates returned, totally “disappointed in Bulgarian policy” because they had expected “a loyal and sincere policy towards our unfortunate land” from Stambolijski. “[I]nstead of leaving Macedonia alone,” they wrote in their report to the General Council, “and giving a courageous example to the other Balkan aspirants, Bulgarian diplomats adhere to the same great mistakes of the past”.

As a result, on November 18, 1919, the General Council of the Macedonian Societies in Switzerland sent the following, highly indicative, telegram to the Bulgarian Prime Minister Aleksandar Stambolijski:

Your coming into power has made us, all the Macedonians and the whole civilized world, believe that the enormous mistakes of Bulgarian diplomacy will be rectified. Unfortunately, nothing of the kind has been done by your entourage consisting of people who faithfully served the policy of Ferdinand of Coburg and who bear a heavy responsibility for all the Macedonian misfortunes. Instead of leaving Macedonia alone and thus giving a courageous example to all Balkan aspirants, you have continued making the same serious blunders over our land. You are about to sign an accord in Paris the provisions of which on the rights of minorities will bring nothing good to the unfortunate Macedonians.

We energetically protest against this sad diplomatic game and refuse to opt for Bulgarian nationality. We declare before the conscience of the whole world that we do not wish to be instruments of the new irredentism you have been creating with your imperialist policy.

The following telegram was sent on the same day to the **Peace Conference** in Paris:

The General Council of the Macedonian Societies in Switzerland, assembled at its plenary session and working on behalf of the whole Macedonian people, without serving any foreign policy whatsoever, energetically protests against the provisions allowing Macedonians the right to opt for Bulgarian nationality.

We do not want to be made instruments of Bulgarian irredentism in Macedonia. Macedonia has never been a part of the present Kingdom of Bulgaria. Bulgarian diplomats, who bear a part of the responsibility for the misfortunes of the Macedonian population, are by no means qualified to represent our cause and have no right to do so.

Starting from the principles which inspire the Peace Conference, for the very honour of it, we wish, we beseech it, to establish Macedonia as an autonomous entity and incorporate it into Yugoslavia.

This was the most categorical appraisal of Bulgarian policy towards Macedonia and most explicit differentiation between Bulgarian and Macedonian national interests. This was a language which came close to that of Čupovski and Misirkov and also reflected the position within the community of Macedonian émigrés in Bulgaria. The last paragraph of the telegram to the Peace Conference was of particular significance, where the representatives of the Macedonian people in that historically crucial situation sought the salvation of the integrity and freedom of Macedonia within the joint, federal state of Yugoslavia, and expressly outside the borders of Bulgaria, hoping that in this way, considering the interests of the other united peoples in the newly-established state, they would somehow be protected from the greater-state and assimilatory policy of Serbia. This fully corresponded with the clauses of the Voden Declaration and the provisions of Hadžitašković's Promemoria, and was very close to the concepts of the Macedonian Revolutionary Committee of Dimitrija Čupovski in Petrograd, and finally to the political option which was achieved (only in one section of the land) following the Second World

War. This was another testimony to the sympathies that the Macedonians, too, nourished for the genuine South-Slav (Yugoslav) idea, as the foremost token of the freedom, self-determination, self-rule and equality of the peoples in the Balkan region. And the prospects of what was becoming a historical consciousness seemed auspicious.

17.

The activity of the Macedonian émigré community in Bulgaria was of particular significance at that time. “The forces of the left” were among the first to raise their voice for the preservation of Macedonia’s entirety and for securing its freedom. Perhaps this was most vividly expressed in Dimitar Blagoev’s words, who as early as December 10, 1917 (speaking in the Bulgarian National Assembly in connection with the adoption of the military budget for the coming year), condemned Bulgarian policy as acquisitive and favouring division. He added that the First World War was in fact a continuation of the previous wars for establishing “full control over the Slavic element in Macedonia”. When the bourgeois representatives demanded of him that he explain his descent and his position on Macedonia more clearly and more openly in public, he bravely declared: “I was born in Zagoričani; however, I am not a Bulgarian, but a Slav, and being that, if you want to know, I am for Macedonia, as a Slavic land, which would have its own administration.” A year later he presented the same views, once again in the National Assembly, as the leader of the Bulgarian Social Democratic Party. He demanded the withdrawal of Bulgarian troops from Macedonia and its return to the Macedonians “who, in full freedom, will decide on their future themselves”. Supporting the signing of peace, Blagoev made it clear that the Macedonians were not Bulgarians and repeated his conviction that Macedonia had been occupied and annexed by force by Bulgarian thieves. In reply to the retorts of some representatives that the Bulgarians were Macedonia’s liberators, he said: “Macedonia is not liberated; that is what the Macedonians themselves think, and your goals in the Balkan [Wars] and now are acquisitive.” Therefore, he demanded of the Bulgarian government that it leave Macedonia and make it possible for the Macedonians to decide freely on their future, because “a large part of the Macedonian intelligentsia wishes Macedonia to be for the Macedonians” and “even in Bulgaria the Macedonian activists propagate Macedonia for the Macedonians, an independent Macedonia”, as a result of which it was necessary for the Macedonians themselves to state “what they feel themselves to be”.

Another ‘leftist’, the old socialist revolutionary and comrade of Delčev and Sandanski, Dimo Hadžidimov, during “the Ilinden celebrations” in Sofia, when

the 'External Representative Office' proudly "paraded before the German kaiser", wrote his article 'These and Those', where he gave a sharp critical review of the Macedonian struggle and Bulgarian policy towards Macedonia, when everything was being done to destroy the soul of the Macedonian liberation cause, when "Macedonia was not even allowed to belong to herself". Hadžidimov pointed out Bulgaria's involvement in the 'settlement' of the Macedonian question, writing: "It finally involved itself in a fatal way: through an agreement for the partition of Macedonia. Subsequent history is already known, as it has continued up to the present day." Hadžidimov described the insurmountable difficulties in the struggle for the attainment of the true ideals of the Macedonian people, and concluded: "And I will bow before the memory of those Macedonian activists who have fought for an unrecognized ideal, always guided by the sober predictions that acquisitive policy has been fatal for Macedonia as well as all of the neighbouring Balkan states, and for Bulgaria in particular."

But the "military and Macedonian" censors prevented the publication of this article at that point. It appeared a year or two later, when the War had already ended and the fatal recapitulation was being made.

A very similar case was that of Anton Keckarov, who in the storm of the First World War had the courage, despite all Bulgarian ambitions, to demand autonomy for Macedonia. A few years later, writing in the journal *Makedonsko S'znanie*, an author sharing similar ideas and signing himself with the initials G.K. remembered: "At that time, A.K-ov, a good Macedonian, born in the town of Ohrid, an old writer and revolutionary, now in Bulgaria, wrote a letter to Sofia. There he wrote that Bulgaria should give autonomy to Macedonia, and they answered him saying that he should never mention such a thing again, because he would be expelled and incarcerated in Kurt-Bunar. And therefore everyone kept a low profile, as it was war and everything was being done by force."⁷³²

18.

These demands were most fully expressed among Macedonian émigrés in Bulgaria only after the breaking of the Macedonian Front and the capitulation of Bulgaria, when in October 1918 a group originating from Seres, headed again by Dimo Hadžidimov, published a historically very important **Declaration**, which, among other things, stated:

Faithful to their earlier struggle in the Macedonian liberation movement for the attainment of a popular ideal which was not in accord with the aspirations of Balkan

⁷³²*Makedonsko s'znanie* e, á, 8, Vi ena, 16.š .1924.

nationalism and imperialism, the adherents of the revolutionary organization active in the former Seres revolutionary district, bearing in mind all the past and forthcoming events, make the following declaration:

1. Instead of Balkan nationalism which, in its aspirations for acquisition and dominance over alien lands and peoples, has ruined the whole of the Balkan Peninsula part by part, we raise the old flag of Macedonian autonomy, the flag of Balkan concord and future Balkan brotherhood.

2. Macedonia should be established within its appropriate geographical borders and mainly on the basis of Salonika and the valley of the Vardar; Skopje and Bitola should have their own natural geographical, commercial and economic hinterland.

3. The territorial liberation of Macedonia is not an act of hostility towards the free Balkan peoples, nor is it a forceful or separatist mutilation of their territories. It should be established for the sake of all as a well-circumscribed geographical unit and represent a joint capital invested for the common enterprise of those peoples – the only thing that will unite them in peaceful life, sincere cooperation and an honourable future.

4. Macedonia should have for itself, for the nationalities who live there and for its Balkan brothers, the most suitable form of government, created after the example of the Swiss Federal Republic, with full and equal freedom for all the nationalities in educational, religious, political, cultural and economic respects under the protectorship of the free democratic nations.

At the same time, seeing a threat to “Bulgarian national ideals”, the responsible state agencies organized, in Sofia, on the premises of the University, an assembly of “confirmed” and “distinguished activists from all the currents of the former revolutionary struggle” and aimed to “reach decisions” on “two questions: (1) what to demand, and (2) what body should demand it?” They concluded that “the only way is to re-establish, if possible, all the brotherhoods; their delegates should elect a new Executive Committee, a purely legal body which will be the interpreter of the will of the émigré community, and even of the population of Macedonia”.

In spite of the reaction of prominent Macedonian activists, the **Founding Convention of the Brotherhoods** started on November 22, 1918, again “in one of the university lecture-halls”, electing a **Provisional Bureau of the Brotherhoods** headed by Ivan Karandžulov as the president and Prof. Nikola Milev as the secretary. After two days of work, “43 delegates” elected an **Executive Committee of the Macedonian Brotherhoods in Bulgaria**, headed by the same president, and adopted the following resolution:

The delegates of the brotherhoods, expressing the unequivocal will of the Bulgarian population in Macedonia, give the Executive Committee an imperative mandate to be guided by the following two principles in its activity:

- (1) The indivisibility of Macedonia;
- (2) Its incorporation within Bulgaria.

In the same spirit, in the period from January 5 to 12, 1919, the Executive Committee submitted “**a short preliminary memoir**” to the military missions of the Entente and the head of the American legation in Sofia.

Yet as early as January 28, 1919, a **Group of refugees from the regions of Kukuš, Seres, Salonika, Skopje, Bitola, Kočani, Kostur and Veles** published a **Call to the Macedonian Refugees in Bulgaria** and were the first to join, openly and clearly, the Declaration of the ‘Seres circle’, because “all the other activists and leaders of the once glorious Internal Revolutionary Organization are either mercenary servants of a policy for which Macedonian ‘*cliffs and rocks*’ are of no state value, or have no courage to express the interests of their own people and protest against the shameful twisting of their will”. At the moments when the fateful Peace Conference was held in Paris, the signatories stated: “Dark forces moving along dark roads are feverishly working to prevent the voice of the Macedonian people from being heard before the judgement of mankind”, continuing: “It is in the foremost interest of the present Balkan governments to suppress that voice, as they want to divide our land and cut up our people, as if it were some wild African tribe, unworthy of independent existence.” Standing up strongly against the slogan of the Executive Committee, “*Unification and incorporation!*”, the Group asked the question: “Until when shall we tolerate that shameful guardianship by people who have neither children nor property or homes in Macedonia, who abandoned it half a century ago and who have traded and are again trading with the Macedonian cause and Macedonia, for which, just like some of the present Bulgarian ministers, they too, ‘do not give a damn’?” Protesting against the various manoeuvres of the Executive Committee of the Brotherhoods, the signatories declared:

Autonomy is the ideal of the Macedonian population itself and it can be given credit only when it is demanded by that population. And it should be demanded at the right moment and without hesitation. The road has already been opened. The people of Seres, Bitola, Prilep, Salonika, Skopje and Veles, through their representatives from the former Internal Revolutionary Organization, have achieved a great deal in this direction, both inside Macedonia, before all the nationalities, and abroad.

Therefore:

Let us raise our voice for an *Autonomous Macedonia, guaranteed internationally and protected from any attempts at aggression*, and thus thwart the planned division and breakup which will always carry the spark of future Balkan fires... No silence, no hesitation, no alternatives! Together with the population within it, let the Macedonian refugees, wherever destiny may have thrown them, present their demands, in all ways possible, before the military, civil and any other representatives of the outer

world and everywhere and always point to autonomy as the general ideal of the people.

On March 9, 1919, the **Appeal to the Macedonian population and to the émigré community in Bulgaria** was signed, which is the second important document of the drama of Macedonian émigrés in Bulgaria. It bore the signatures of Ćorĉe Petrov, Petar Acev, Tuše Deliiivanov, Mihail I. Gerdžikov, Taskata Spasov Serski, Anastas Lozanĉev, Dimo Hadžidimov, D. Ikonov, Hristo Jankov, Krsto Ljondev, Nikola Puškarov, Toma Nikolov, Ćudomir Kantardžiev, Rizo Rizov, Georgi Skrižovski, Petar Poparsov, Pavel Hristov, Luka Džerov, Mišo Škartov, A. Manasiev and H. St-v. The signatories were actually “activists of the former *Internal Revolutionary Organization* in western Macedonia” and “representatives of the *Seres wing* of the same organization”, who “after joint and extensive consideration” of “the general situation and future political existence of Macedonia” analysed the published Declaration of the ‘Seres circle’ and accepted the “basic views” of this document, deciding to come out with a joint appeal for “the idea of the future independent existence of Macedonia”, “for the building and strengthening of the cause aimed at securing Macedonia’s independence”. The signatories stated:

Filled with deep faith that we express the general wish [and] that no Macedonian or Macedonian exile would suspect the purity of our intentions, the firmness of our convictions and the sincerity of our actions, with utmost bitterness we must declare that in the so-called *Executive Committee* of some of the Macedonian brotherhoods we see a form of organized resistance against our endeavours and that we can by no means acknowledge the competence it ascribes to itself – to express the wishes, aspirations and feelings of the Macedonian émigré community in Bulgaria and those of the Macedonian population. This can be justified neither by the motives of its foundation nor by the means of its election or the people constituting it. In our eyes, the Executive Committee is nothing other than a *contrived* representative body of Macedonia, without links to that land, whose task is to divide the émigré community in Bulgaria and ascribe to them desires that the majority of them do not nourish... As for the principle of the independent existence of Macedonia and the struggle in this regard, just as in the past, only the former revolutionary organization is competent to act, and it is the only one capable of giving both the struggle and the principle itself the content which can guarantee sufficient credit before the Macedonian population and create optimistic prospects for success at the Peace Conference. Any other ‘representative bodies’ of ‘autonomous’ ideas can only damage our cause and frustrate its success, frustrate the hopes of a people which does not want foreign rule and which at the same time is thirsty for stable peace in the Balkans, for putting an end, once and for all, to hostility and rivalry between the Balkan peoples.

The text that followed synthesized the demands into four points which basically elaborated the concept of the ‘Seres circle’ expressed in the Declaration.

19.

In the meantime, Bulgarian diplomacy and propaganda activated all possible 'actors' in the Macedonian circles — both in Bulgaria and abroad. In addition to the documents described above, we should mention the **Memoir** signed by the **Macedono-Bulgarian Central Committee in America** and sent, on January 15, 1919, to the United States president Wilson, to the great powers of the Entente and their representatives at the Peace Conference in Paris, and also to the European neutral states, appealing for the preservation of the entirety of Macedonia and its annexation "as a whole to the common Bulgarian fatherland", because "Macedonia should be Bulgarian".

On the other hand, the Executive Committee of the Brotherhoods in Bulgaria, immediately after the publication of the Appeal of March 9, on March 27 sent a '**written request**' that "Macedonia be occupied by the armies of the Entente until the final solution of the question". Another request was submitted on March 31, demanding "a permit for a delegation representing the Macedonian émigré community to be sent to Paris".

Even though it bears the date February 1919, it was in April that an elaborate **Memoir to the president of the Peace Conference and to the governments of the United States of America, Great Britain, Italy, France and Japan** was sent, describing in detail the history of Bulgarian aspirations to control of Macedonia and ending with the request "to incorporate Macedonia, whole and undivided, within its common homeland — its mother Bulgaria".

The mouthpiece of the Executive Committee of the Brotherhoods, *La Macédoine-Macedonia* (in French and English) first appeared in March 1919, and the complete machinery of Bulgarian propaganda was engaged in the collection of 19,000 signatures for a **Petition to the Peace Conference** in Paris.

During the same period, an extensive document bearing the date March 1, 1919 and entitled **Memoir of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization to the presidents of the delegations of the great powers at the Peace Conference** was signed by "the external representatives of the Organization", Aleksandar Protogerov and Todor Aleksandrov. The Memoir stated: "The Macedonian population wishes Macedonia to remain undivided, and by no means to be left under the authority of Serbia and Greece!" The Memoir demanded "self-determination for Macedonia", which would be substantiated by a delegation that "would competently represent the whole Bulgarian population of Macedonia".

As early as March 15, the **Provisional Representative Office of the Former Internal Revolutionary Organization** issued a **Warning to the Macedonian population and Macedonian émigré community in Bulgaria**, which said that

the Memoir had been received only after the Appeal of March 9 “had already been written and signed”, warning the Macedonians:

The signatories to the aforesaid memoir, former activists of the Revolutionary Organization, have obstructed and thwarted at the most crucial moments for our fatherland any attempt at mobilizing the collective mind, consciousness and conscience of the Internal Macedonian Organization so that it itself may deal with the situation created around the Macedonian question and the events before, during and after the war, and by using their accidental power abundantly, these two men have personally appropriated the right to make decisions on behalf and at the expense of Macedonia.

It is not our business to point to the disgrace of Bulgarian statesmen who have allowed such accidental persons to play high political roles only because of their reverence for the rewards offered by Kaiser Wilhelm and due to the fear arising from their connections with the Bulgarian Court. We leave this odd political anomaly to the judgement of the Bulgarian political and social conscience, if there is such a thing.

As far as our compatriots in Macedonia and Bulgaria are concerned, we are bound to declare before them that these persons have long ago ceased to have anything in common with the Revolutionary Organization and have long ago chosen not to follow its path, but another, abusing its name only for their personal benefit; that any involvement on their part today in the affairs of the Macedonian cause bears only venom and spite, and that the name, the honour and the past of the Macedonian Revolutionary Organization stand sufficiently high to make us frustrate with all our might, fully and immediately, this unparalleled insanity: our bloodstained and long-suffering Macedonia’s being protected before the Peace Conference by the tools of Kaiserism and by the blustering heroes of the imperial ceremonies in Niš.

20.

There is no doubt that the most important work was that of “the activists of the former *Seres revolutionary organization*” and that of “*the Former United Internal Revolutionary Organization*”. As early as October 1918, the first group published the **Declaration on the Settlement of the Macedonian Question** described above, and a short time later they came out with a detailed explication entitled *Back to Autonomy*, which was “a kind of commentary on the Declaration of the former Seres revolutionaries”, whose unnamed author was actually the ideologist of this group, Dimo Hadžidimov. This pamphlet, which played a significant role not only among the Macedonians but also in the wider public, examined nearly all the essential questions at that historical moment. After giving an ‘Assessment of the present political situation in Bulgaria’, it analysed the following subjects: ‘The origin and development of the idea of autonomy in the past’, ‘Autonomy is destroyed as a national ideal’, ‘The role of the Macedonian émigré community in

Bulgaria', 'Infiltration within the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization', 'The struggle of the Seres revolutionaries', 'Bulgaria reveals its cards', 'The role of the Balkan dynasties', 'Balkan nationalism in practice', 'Macedonia in 1913', 'The Balkan peoples in the general war', 'The involvement of Bulgaria', 'The military objectives of Bulgaria', 'The role of Macedonian nationalist revolutionaries', 'Following the capitulation', 'Once again towards autonomy as a goal', 'The Balkan governments and autonomy', 'The autonomy of Macedonia and the national self-determination of the Balkan peoples', 'Macedonia facing its destiny and the instigation of national patriotism', 'On the sacrifices of Bulgaria', 'The two Bulgarias', 'Criticism of the idea of autonomy and fear of it', 'The Macedonian ideal in the face of peaceful liquidation', 'The general Balkan role of Macedonia', 'Who is abandoning whom?', 'The Macedonian nationalities and autonomy', 'The leftist currents in Bulgaria and the national question' and 'Through autonomy, towards Balkan self-determination and unification'. As can be seen from the titles, this booklet made a detailed recapitulation of the Macedonian question at that moment, and this was certainly the most powerful and most dependable voice of the Macedonian people, raised in early 1919.

At the same time, some of the more aware activists of the old Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization started gathering for consultations and discussions concerning the future destiny of Macedonia. They also took part in some of the discussions of the brotherhood organizations, where they tried to express the true wishes of the Macedonian people, unmasking Bulgarian policy towards Macedonia. At a gathering of the Macedonian brotherhoods, one of these activists aimed to "prove that Bulgaria has waged 'acquisitive' wars, because there are no Bulgarians in the regions of Seres, Drama, etc.", and when some of the participants reacted to this, he started "patting his pockets and shouting that he had figures with which he would prove his claims".

In November 1918 there was already a larger group of revolutionaries who formed the core of a whole movement. Together with the 'Seres circle', they elected a six-member **Provisional Representative Office of the Organization**, composed of Ćorĉe Petrov, Dimo HadŹidimov, Pavel Hristov, Mihail GerdŹikov, Taskata Spasov Serski and Petar Acev. Having defined the essentials of their concept of the struggle for Macedonia, on November 25, 1918, they authorized the chief vicar of the Bulgarian Uniate Church, Father Paul Christoff, "to represent the former Internal Revolutionary Organization before the outside world and before the Peace Conference, if possible and to the extent that it is made possible for him". He was indeed not admitted to the Peace Conference, but he accomplished a large number of very important actions for the affirmation of the idea of autonomy among the European public and for "the establishment of a new

Switzerland in the Balkans, or of the *Macedonian Republic, autonomous and neutral*".

Of special significance was the effort to print the mouthpiece of the Provisional Representative Office of the Former United Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, *Bjuletin* (Bulletin). Its 10 numbers published the most reliable testimonies reflecting the genuine frame of mind of Macedonian émigrés. It printed a large number of official acts of the movement as well as prompt reactions against the moves of the Executive Committee of the Brotherhoods and the organization of Aleksandrov and Protogerov, and also against the actions of the Bulgarian government and policies. From the fourth number onwards the motto **'Long live a free and independent Macedonia — the pillar of Balkan peace and the Balkan federation!'** was printed beside the newspaper's title.

The Provisional Representative Office raised the concept of Macedonian statehood and relations with neighbouring states and peoples to the highest point. It aimed to define the relations between the Macedonians and other nationalities living inside Macedonia on a fully equal basis. Yet once again, whether because of the circumstances in which it worked or owing to the makeup of its leadership, the Provisional Representative Office could not find enough force to abandon the thesis of the 'Macedonian Bulgarians' and affirm the Macedonian language as the essential instrument in their struggle. Even when their authorized representative in Paris, Paul Christoff, pointed out to the Provisional Representative Office that the Greek and Serbian delegations reacted strongly against the 'Macedonian Bulgarians' thesis, and that they proposed their own thesis that "the national feeling of the Macedonians is a flexible concept, indifferent to foreign propaganda", the Representative Office sent him detailed answers on all the questions he had asked, but **completely ignored the essential question of Macedonian nationality**. On the contrary, defending themselves from attacks that they stood "on international ground and did not recognize that the majority of the Macedonian population was Bulgarian" and that "they did not want the incorporation of Macedonia within Bulgaria in any way", they gave a very definite answer (in order "to make it clear") that **they remained "Macedonian Bulgarians", even though they always aimed to distance themselves from the Bulgarians (in Bulgaria) and in particular from Bulgarian national policy**.

In the first issue of *Bjuletin* they stated: "Everyone, together with us, desires and declares one thing only, everywhere and before everyone: *we do not want the dismemberment of Macedonia in any way, as we want to preserve our language, our faith and our nationality,*" but a little below they added: "If, however, the officials of the Foreign Ministry do not share this principle, then we are ready to confess that the *Macedonian Bulgarians* would never wish and would never agree to pay for Bulgaria's expansion at the cost of their fatherland or parts thereof."

This duality in their position once again (just as in Bucharest) proved to be fatal for the success of the entire movement and for the result of the Peace Conference in Paris. For, in spite of everything, **nearly all the memoranda received from Macedonians dared not affirm the Macedonian national individuality and present it before the international public at the crucial moment; on the contrary, almost all of these spoke in the name of the ‘Macedonian Bulgarians’**. This was not only tolerated, but was also supported and adroitly exploited by Bulgarian propaganda and policy. They even went further than that, and all other currents inspired from official circles, even the Bulgarian government itself, started occasionally supporting not Macedonia’s ‘unification’ with or ‘incorporation’ into Bulgaria, but Macedonia’s autonomy — as a palliative solution, once it became clear that annexation was impossible. One of the consequences was that this also discredited the concept of the Provisional Representative Office. As a result, Paul Christoff insisted on a clear Macedonian national concept. Yet it seemed that the circumstances were not favourable for such a presentation of Macedonia from the capital of defeated Bulgaria.

21.

In addition to these two camps — the Executive Committee of the Brotherhoods and the Provisional Representative Office — there appeared other organized groups which nevertheless joined one of these two currents. Here we must mention, for instance, the **Memoir to the Peace Conference** in Paris by **Macedonian émigrés in Constantinople** of January 18, 1919, which, among other things, said:

Macedonia has always fought and suffered to gain the attributes of a national unit, single and undivided... Our greatest wish, and it is a reflection of the wishes of the Macedonian population itself, is that the Peace Congress establish our land as our joint homeland, a single and undivided Macedonia, with autonomy similar to the Swiss cantonal regime.

In June 1919, the **Macedonian-Romanian Cultural Society in Bucharest** sent a **Memoir to the Peace Conference** in Paris, where it, too, supported “the idea of the establishment of an autonomous Macedonia”.

Even the mouthpiece of the ruling Bulgarian Agrarian Union, *Zemledělsko Zname* (Agrarian Flag), published an article entitled ‘Long live autonomous Macedonia!’. This was also done by the mouthpieces of other parties, but **always referring to the ethnic character of Macedonia as “Bulgarian”**.

Of special significance in this period was the renewed **Macedonian Student Group** in Sofia. It was founded by young Macedonian students who had returned from the front and had already experienced Bulgaria's 'unifying' national policy. As a result, they immediately raised the already greatly dishonoured flag of "the autonomy of Macedonia" and put forward the slogan of a Balkan federation, supporting unreservedly the position of the Provisional Representative Office and categorically rejecting that of the Executive Committee of the Brotherhoods.

In their **Call to the Macedonian Émigré Community**, printed separately, the Macedonian Student Group came out decisively against the convocation of the **Great Assembly of the Macedonian Émigré Community** in Sofia, making the appeal:

Macedonians, the Executive Committee, which was the basis for the creation of Vrhovism in the past and which has committed the most insolent treachery against Macedonia and its ideal, can never delight in the idea of an autonomous Macedonia. Even today, when this committee says that they have accepted it and will fight for that idea, their printed mouthpieces do not mention even a word of this, and their relations with government circles have not changed at all to give you any assurance and hope that the old sinners have finally reformed themselves and become sincere autonomists. [...] Today, when there is still some small hope that our desperate voice might be heard, there is a healthy, unified organization, basing itself on the pure ideal, in the form of the Provisional Representative Office of the old Internal Revolutionary Organization. [...] Therefore, Macedonians, with a solemn gesture demonstrate to those dark individuals who have committed so many treacheries towards our fatherland that you will never allow mockery of your name and of the sacredness of your ideal, *but that you will be filled with indignation by the unscrupulous people of the Executive Committee* [...] and that you will use all your efforts for the attainment of your and national ideal — a free and independent Macedonia.

22.

Preparations were also under way in this period for the publication of a **Memoir on the Situation in Macedonia**, which would support the idea of autonomy. The document with a detailed explanation was to be printed in French, German, English, Italian and Bulgarian and aimed "to encompass the whole of Europe, for which Macedonia was a mere geographical term, and very little known at that". Naumov, an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was given a permit to print the text in the State Printing House free of charge, but at the same time, to use the words of a contemporary, "a vile and unprecedented forgery was carried out... That part of the Memoir which pleaded in favour of Macedonia's autonomy was tampered with by criminal hands, deliberately altered in the sense — that the

Macedonian people wanted to be unified within the common homeland — mother Bulgaria!” The forgery was discovered by the Macedonian student groups in Geneva and Vienna, there was a great storm among the members of the Macedonian Student Group of Sofia University and the nine members involved in the forgery were expelled. In June 1919, the Group sent a strong **protest to the Peace Conference** in Paris, which, among other things, stated:

The policy of the neighbouring countries of Macedonia, friends and enemies, has led to three wars and turned our native land into ashes and has banished its sons to foreign lands. [...] We, the academic young people of this unfortunate land, acting as the spokesmen of the wishes and will of Macedonian refugees, and also of the entire Macedonian population, most energetically protest against the inhuman measures used by the Serbs and Greeks to devastate our land and destroy its elite with the purpose of suppressing any form of free and independent life.

We also protest against any policy of *partition* of our native land and declare that the entire Macedonian people, regardless of race and religion, has always longed for, and now longs more than ever for and awaits with impatience the realization of its sacred ideal — *Autonomy*, so that it can start a free and independent life, for the sake of the good and peace of its fatherland, for the sake of the good of and peace in the Balkans, for the sake of the good, peace and progress of humanity.

We most insistently beg the Conference to take this unfortunate land under its protection and oblige the military and administrative authorities of the Balkan states to withdraw from there and to prevent their interference in its life.

To establish an autonomous Macedonia, under the protectorship of a great power, disinterested in Balkan affairs, this means to build a natural barrier on this volcanic peninsula and thus guarantee peace once and for all.

The Group did not abandon this position even after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and the endorsement of Macedonia’s partition, and at the **Second Great Assembly of the Macedonian Brotherhoods** in Sofia responded with a **Resolution** of its own, publicized in the energetic **Call to the Macedonian Émigré Community in Bulgaria** of January 2, 1921, condemning once again the actions of the Executive Committee and the dispatch of Ivan Karandžulov “to plead in favour of the Macedonian cause abroad” and continuing to defend the idea of an “autonomous Macedonia”.

In spite of their ardent youthful patriotism, the Group still did not have the power to elevate the Macedonian **ethnographic idea** onto the necessary pedestal, something which was done a decade later by the revived Macedonian Student Group — within the framework of the activity of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United).

23.

Although there was a whole array of Macedonian organizations and groups in the émigré circles in this period, the principal ones were the **Executive Committee of the Brotherhoods** and the **Provisional Representative Office of the Former United Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization**. Here we cannot consider the **Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization of Aleksandrov and Protogerov** as a separate organization as it worked in full agreement with the Executive Committee of the Brotherhoods, and both were instruments of the Bulgarian government.

But the Versailles decision was approaching and the government made an attempt to gather all the Macedonian currents under a single leadership and to act on behalf of all Macedonians before the international Peace Conference, to protect its “national interests”. The **Ninth Regular Assembly of the Brotherhoods** was scheduled for August 24, 1919, in Sofia, with this purpose in mind. A **Neutral Unifying Commission** was formed there, which started contacting both parties. The negotiations, however, showed that there were insurmountable differences of ideological and political nature, and the attempt to unite them failed.

On September 21, 1919, the **Executive Committee**, via Dr K. Stanišev, declared: “The Executive Committee refuses to enter into relations with persons who are not elected by a body and are representing no one.” On September 20, Ćorĉe Petrov informed the Neutral Unifying Commission that the invitation had been received at a time “when the other four of the Provisional Representative Office were absent from Sofia, as a result of which the Representative Office cannot hold a meeting immediately to give an answer”. This was in accordance with the letter of September 3, where the Provisional Representative Office clearly stated: “We do not deem it necessary to make, without a mandate from our organizations, any further judgements concerning the question raised, and we shall leave it to the intelligence and conscience of the émigrés to assess who has invested what in the protection of the freedom and independence of Macedonia.” In fact, the reasons were clearly expressed in the official public “**Declaration of the Provisional Representative Office of the former Internal Mac. Revol. Organization**” issued on August 3, 1919.

On September 8, the Neutral Unifying Commission issued a “**Very Urgent Circular**” to “the entire Macedonian émigré community in Bulgaria”, proposing the convocation, on September 28, of a congress of the Macedonian émigré community with the following tasks:

- (a) to manifest the unity of the émigré community;
- (b) to manifest the principle of the autonomy of Macedonia;

- (c) to elect an overall managing body with a Higher Council which would be given a mandate to act before all external major and minor factors for the attainment of the ideal of an autonomous Macedonia in its geographical and economic entirety;
- (d) to elect an editorial committee for a single mouthpiece of the entire émigré body.

The “great objective” of the Macedonians, according to the Commission, could be achieved:

- (a) only if an end is put to personal conflicts and partisan passions;
- (b) only if a stop is put to all individual legal and illegal organizations, and if, through mutual concessions and personal sacrifice, a single legal organization is created which will take over the leadership of the entire émigré community in the name of our ardent salvation and the salvation of the minorities that populate our long-suffering Fatherland; and
- (c) only if we give the movement a purely Macedonian colour and if we protect it from any external and dangerous – state, party, factional, etc. – influences.

This circular was regarded as the emergence of a **third party** within the Macedonian émigré community and was attacked by both bodies. The Executive Committee of the Macedonian Brotherhoods in Bulgaria tried, on September 12, to explain its position before the brotherhoods by a **Circular** of its own, but there was an even greater reaction within the brotherhoods. For instance, the **Kostur Charitable Brotherhood** convened an extraordinary general assembly in Sofia as early as September 14, where it passed the following resolution:

1. The Kostur Brotherhood in Sofia which has 300 members at present, all of them émigrés from the far-off Kostur region, stands firmly and unreservedly on the position: *an Autonomous Macedonia within its geographical and economic borders under the protectorship of the great powers*; this position expresses the will of all Kostur émigrés to be found on the territory of Bulgaria and also outside it.
2. As the entire Macedonian émigré community in Bulgaria has now accepted the principle of an autonomous Macedonia and as there are accordingly no differences among them, in principle and also in tactical terms, the Brotherhood believes that the mutual struggle between the two leading bodies – the Executive Committee and the Provisional Representative Office – is the product of personal ambition.
3. The Brotherhood, finding that the choice of the two leading bodies which have usurped the leadership of certain parts of the émigré community is irregular, condemns the activity of the aforementioned bodies as being directed not towards the main objective – the defence of the rights and wishes of Macedonian émigrés – but towards mutual conflicts motivated by personal aspirations and ambitions, that uselessly spend the forces, energy and time of the people, thus removing them from any creative work.
4. It protests against the conduct of the two leading bodies which up to the present day – when Macedonia is hanging over the abyss of permanent subjugation – have been unable to rid themselves of mutual friction to retain their illegally gained

leading position, thus tantalizing the émigrés for a whole year now and blocking the demonstration of their collective power; therefore, we invite the Macedonian émigré community to rid themselves of these divided leading bodies, as well as of the persons who constitute them, by taking part in a congress which they will do their utmost to make a general congress uniting the émigré community, proclaiming courageously and categorically the formula of *Autonomy* adopted by the entire émigré community and electing a single representative body which will make use of the confidence of the delegates of the entire émigré community.

5. It supports any initiative for the convocation, with the agreement of the two bodies, of the great congress in Sofia on September 28 and requests of the émigrés that they influence their leaders in this direction. If, however, this action before the leading bodies fails, the Macedonian émigré community is obliged to impose a unification from below by sending delegates to the congress convened by the Executive Committee on the same date of September 28, where by the force of its declared slogans it will choose such people at the head of the émigré community as will be worthy and suitable to represent them and their wishes and aspirations before the external world, raising the motto: *Macedonia to the Macedonians*.

6. It appeals to the inhabitants of Kostur to organize themselves within the province into brotherhoods and societies, reinforcing their ranks and giving an example and encouragement to the entire émigré community in its aspirations to achieve union on the basis of an *Autonomous Macedonia*, the only solution for the salvation of such far-off regions as our Kostur – to elect and send delegates to the congress on September 28 who will firmly adhere to the proclaimed slogans and who will finally be determined to disassociate themselves from all the leaders in the bodies who have been abusing the Macedonian cause, deflecting it from its true course.

7. The Kostur Brotherhood declares that if the forthcoming congress does not accept unreservedly the *formula of autonomy* and does not elect, as representatives of the émigré community, persons who will guarantee indomitable support for the position taken by the entire Macedonian émigré community, it reserves its freedom of action and therefore asks the émigré community to send delegates with a conditional mandate concerning the adoption of the aforesaid demands.

8. It invites all Macedonian brotherhoods and societies to join in this resolution which will serve as a programme of action at the forthcoming congress.

Obviously, the Resolution of the Kostur Brotherhood expressly took the side of the Neutral Unifying Commission and accepted the concepts of the Representative Office as its own and the general Macedonian programme, but seemed not fully to understand the essence of the struggle that the Representative Office fought against the Executive Committee and Greater-Bulgarian policy in the Macedonian cause. These actions of the Kostur Brotherhood, however, as well as the actions of some other organizations, were significant encouragement for the Macedonian émigré community to take a more independent position at the ensuing congress.

On September 20, 1919, the Neutral Commission once again formulated its conclusions and proposals in its **Call to the Entire Macedonian Émigré Community in Bulgaria**, presenting the positions of the two main bodies of Macedo-

nian émigrés, and at the Great Assembly of the Macedonian Brotherhoods (September 28 — October 1, 1919) it submitted a **Report** in which it described the course of negotiations, enclosing the texts of the letters exchanged with the two bodies — the Executive Committee and the Provisional Representative Office. It also registered the agreed distancing from the organization of Protogerov and Aleksandrov, which did not formally take part in the assembly, as indeed the Provisional Representative Office did not.

One of the most active members of the Neutral Unifying Commission, **Nikola Kirov Majski**, wrote in his Recollections of the course of the congress:

Guided by the ardent desire to manifest its unifying power and enthusiastic in its aspirations to create a *united front*, i.e. a *single united Macedonian legal organization* built on sound foundations, the émigré community, whom we invited, took a massive and active part in the work of the First Great Congress, if nothing else, in the duel between the Greater-Bulgarian idea of annexation, putting forward Simeon Radev, the *Minister Plenipotentiary of Bulgaria*, as its ideologist, and the autonomist idea, with Kliment Razmov appearing as its ideologist. The idea of *autonomy* won, the idea of *a unified, integral and independent Macedonia within its geographical and economic borders*.

The **Resolution** of the Great Assembly of the Macedonian Brotherhoods in Bulgaria also stated:

In the name of justice, humanity and lasting peace, the Assembly makes a supreme call to the Paris Conference and begs it to raise Macedonia, within its geographical and economic borders, into an autonomous state, independent of the rest of the Balkan states.

At the same time the Assembly declares that Macedonia cannot be considered bound by any decisions which might be taken against its right to life and against its lawful demands, which in the case of dispute can be verified through a plebiscite carried out under the supervision of the great powers.

As a matter of fact, these were the demands of all the Macedonian émigrés who were in a position to state their opinion in public. The mouthpiece of the Provisional Representative Office, *Bjuletin*, published several dozens resolutions by various Macedonian brotherhoods and societies which put forward precisely these demands. As an illustration, we shall quote the demands of the **Society of the Macedonian Émigré Community in Plovdiv**, encompassing members from all the regions of Macedonia. The demands were expressed in its **Resolution** adopted on August 3, 1919:

1. We want freedom and independence for our tormented fatherland of Macedonia in the name of justice, so highly proclaimed by the president of the United States; in the name of the glorious and revolutionary past of Macedonia; in the name of its full emancipation from the national policies of the Balkan states and in the name of tranquillity, peace and brotherhood in the Balkans, and

2. We give a solemn oath before the whole world and its conscience, and also before the altar of our fatherland, that if this time, again, it is abandoned and dismembered by oppressors, as long as there is Macedonia, as long as the hearts of its sons beat, as long as blood flows in their veins – and until we finally see our fatherland undivided, free and independent of anyone – we shall not cease our struggle, however unequal it may be.

On November 27, 1919, however, the **Treaty of Neuilly** was signed between the victorious powers and Bulgaria, sanctioning the division of Macedonia. The hopes of the Macedonians were again betrayed, and this time new paths for a new struggle had to be sought. Several questions arose as being of essential importance: **was it possible to manipulate any further with the ‘Macedonian Bulgarians’ thesis; what should be done if autonomy could not be secured under the sponsorship of Bulgarian policy and what position should be taken towards the new state of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; and what social and political forces would be willing to accept and lead the Macedonian national liberation struggle?**

Even though, when communicating in public, all the currents in Bulgaria, for fear of being shown the “Dupnica border crossing” at the least, had to use the expression ‘Macedonian Bulgarians’, there are testimonies that, for instance, the ‘Seres circle’ worked not “on the realization of Bulgarian ideas concerning Macedonia” (“as before”), but on the attainment of “either autonomy for Macedonia or a confederation of Balkan states”. They added that “they feel themselves to be neither Serbs nor Bulgarians or Greeks”, but “call themselves Macedonians-Slavs”.

In a brief period of less than a year, Bulgarian policy covered a long evolutionary path from a formal point of view: from its demands for unification and Macedonia’s annexation to Bulgaria it now turned to the slogan of the autonomy of Macedonia. There it saw the only chance of strengthening the Bulgarian ethnographic identification of the Macedonian people, waiting for a more suitable moment to achieve the essential aim of its “national programme” of “unification”. Bulgarian policy sometimes went even further, as illustrated by the words of the “agrarian” Prime Minister Stambolijski who, during his stay (together with another member of the Bulgarian delegation) in Lausanne, in early August 1919, declared: “Bulgaria, as a final resort, will demand Macedonia’s autonomy. If it fails in this, it will demand its autonomy within the framework of Yugoslavia,” believing that “there will be no peace in the Balkans if Macedonia remains part of Serbia and is not granted autonomy”, as was envisaged for the Croats in the new state.

Yet the refusal of the Macedonians to go along with the Bulgarians and their orientation towards Yugoslavia was by no means acceptable to Sofia. On October 8, 1919, the delegate of the Serbian government and of the High Command in

Sofia, General Tucaković, informed those responsible in Belgrade that the Macedonian émigrés in Bulgaria were divided into four groups, saying: “One group was in favour of Macedonia’s autonomy under the protectorship of Yugoslavia, with municipal, local and educational self-rule. The Church would come, in their understanding, under the authority of the Serbian Patriarchate.” Another group was interested “in knowing the minimal rights which Yugoslavia would give to the Macedonian population”, whereas the other two groups favoured cooperation with Bulgaria alone.

At the moment when Belgrade expected decisions most favourable to itself from Paris, and when the Macedonians “owing to the uncertainty, are still suspicious of Yugoslavia as well”, **General Tucaković** wrote from Sofia: “It is necessary to take very cautious political action to explain to these people that Yugoslavia is actually the achievement of their former and current idea of a Slavic confederation of the Balkan states.” A letter from the **Serbian Minister of War and the Navy**, of October 3, 1919, was written in the same spirit. There, among other things, he said:

I find that the Bulgarians believe that the most dangerous thing would be if the Macedonians develop the idea of – Macedonia with Yugoslavia. This is a very attractive idea for the great majority of the Macedonians, especially after political freedoms and various kinds of material assistance have been given to them in our country; therefore I believe that this idea should be developed in opposition to the Bulgarian idea of autonomy. The Macedonians, who are proud of their name, as a result of the struggle between us and the Bulgarians in particular, are beginning to see a great advantage in going with us, both because of the question of guarantees for the development of their people (they consider themselves as independent of us and the Bulgarians) and because of their future political freedoms and material well-being. The majority of them indeed feel themselves to be neither Serbs nor Bulgarians.

Probably because of this tactic of Serbian policy before the adoption of the final decisions by the Peace Conference, some prominent activists of the Macedonian movement in Bulgaria at the time, such as **Āorĉe Petrov, Paul Christoff (Pol Hristov), Petar Āaulev and Milan Āurlukov**, demanded a meeting with the Serbian delegation in Sofia and even said that “the further struggle is fruitless and that they wanted to suggest to the Macedonians that they be reconciled to remaining equal members of a greater Yugoslavia, demanding amnesty and safety in return”. The accuracy of this information cannot be corroborated, but subsequent events undoubtedly point to the fact that the activists had already seen the decisions fatal for Macedonia and were seeking ways to find a less harmful solution.

Moreover, these activists personally felt the Bulgarophile activity of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization of Todor Aleksandrov, which enjoyed the full support of the official and unofficial circles of Bulgaria. In those days, in a letter dated July 6, 1919, Aleksandrov wrote to commander Panajot Karanfilov that for the time being the Macedonians should fight for “the establishment of a more independent Macedonia, as the lesser evil, faced with the impossibility of unification at this time. Only the leftist and Bolshevik Hadžidimov, the idle anarchist Gerđžikov, the dandy devil Ćorĉe and the traitors of the Bulgarian people in the past and now, the followers of Sandanski, speak about and agitate for autonomy being demanded for Macedonia — as it has been a separate economic and geographical entity, with a distinct ‘Macedonian people’, with its own history for centuries — so that they would not pay the debts of Bulgaria, and some of them are threatening in this way: ‘If by some chance the whole of Macedonia is given to Bulgaria, we shall fight with arms in our hands to prevent that unification’.”

And indeed, a little later, Ćorĉe Petrov, Dimo Hadžidimov and others nourishing the same beliefs were liquidated in the middle of Sofia or in its surroundings by that same Todor Aleksandrov, who regarded the Macedonian national idea as the greatest danger to the “Bulgarian cause” among the Macedonians.

24.

While Macedonian émigrés waged their battle using the public word and numerous meetings, symposia, gatherings and congresses, in Macedonia itself the **national movement** developed in the shadow of the occupiers’ bayonets and with extremely limited opportunities. There was indeed a widespread conviction that Macedonia would gain national self-rule, regardless of the framework. As a result, concrete plans and proposals were made, of considerable significance for the subsequent development of Macedonian national thought. Highly illustrative is the report of the **Serbian command of the border troops in Veles and its surroundings** of March 7, 1919, where, among other things, it describes the **idea of Macedonian autonomy**, saying:

This autonomy of Macedonia would encompass the whole of the Serbian, Greek and Bulgarian parts of Macedonia — from Kaĉanik to the Šar Mountains and to the River Struma. Its centre would be Salonika. It is believed that America would wholeheartedly support this action. According to this same agreement with America, American troops and police would remain in that autonomous Macedonia for three years, centred in Salonika, after which the Americans would withdraw and the Macedonians would form their own army, police and other authorities.

You can very often hear that somewhere negotiations are under way between the representatives of an autonomous Macedonia and a representative of Albania for joint action. They have reached agreement on all questions; there was a dispute only concerning Ohrid and Debar.

The work on an autonomous Macedonia would consist, above all, of acquainting the people with this idea and persuading them of the possibility of its achievement; then each region of Macedonia would send a petition to the congress and to Wilson, demanding, in accordance with the principle proclaimed by Wilson himself, guarantees for the right of the Macedonians to self-determination. These petitions, supported by a sufficient number of signatures, would demand the autonomy of Macedonia under the protectorship of the great powers.

A large part of the people believe that the present situation will not be maintained, and that it is fairly certain that Macedonia will gain autonomy. They cleverly hide this conviction and communicate it only to those whom they believe to share the same idea.

Sober people are saying that if by any chance Macedonia is not granted autonomy, they would set as the minimum of their demands a guarantee for the respect of the right to minority, as stated in the proclamation by the heir to the throne in the month of December. Respect for the right to minority would be guaranteed by the congress in Paris. According to this right, they would have their own schools and their own language in the administration. Some of them even say: We shall start a cultural struggle against those coming from Serbia; if they are stronger – the Macedonian language will gradually disappear, and together with it the Macedonian question as well, but if they do not prove stronger – they themselves will receive our language and will be melded with the Macedonians.

At the same time the Macedonians also looked for friends or allies in the states among which they were divided and where they had to live. It was obvious from subsequent developments that the only trustworthy ally could be found in the **Communist movement**, which from the very outset proclaimed the principle of self-determination of nations, including the right of secession from the existing states. **General Tucaković** was well aware of this and, analysing the position of the ‘Seres circle’ vis-à-vis the current situation, he wrote:

But their present drifting does not exclude the possibility of their acceptance, above all, of the Bolshevik movement, hoping that it will give them the strongest guarantees of their future independence.

In Vardar Macedonia, for example, the Macedonians found occasional protection in the **Serbian Social-Democratic Party** as well as in the **Socialist Workers’ Party of Yugoslavia (Communists)**, whose periodicals printed many truths about the real situation and true aspirations of the Macedonian people. Even the **Bulgarian Communist Party (left-wing socialists)** as early as June 19, 1919, issued a special leaflet, “‘Greater’ Bulgaria or a Balkan Socialist Republic?”, in which it explained in detail its position on and attitude towards the “nationalistic acquisitive

policy” of Bulgaria. It rejected the outdated thesis of Macedonia’s autonomy and spoke out in favour of a “socialist republic” with the following clear objectives: “Not autonomy for Macedonia, but a Balkan Socialist Federation of Soviet Republics, where Macedonia would be an autonomous region, equal to the other Balkan nations — this is the only safe way leading to the liberation of Macedonia and the national unification of the Bulgarian people.”

Obviously, even communists in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria **were still unable to abandon the traditionally accepted views on the ethnic character of the Macedonian people. They started speaking of an individual Macedonian ethnic entity considerably later**, and it was in the 1930s that they finally made that position a part of their programme.

A group of the Macedonian progressive émigré community in Bulgaria, led by Dimo Hadžidimov, left the Provisional Representative Office and the brotherhood organizations and came under the wing of the **Émigré Communist Union**, which was a body of the Bulgarian Communist Party (left-wing socialists), resulting in **further obfuscation of the Macedonian national liberation programme**. Another group of émigrés joined the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization of Todor Aleksandrov and Aleksandar Protogerov, which subsequently came to be known as **the only armed force of the Macedonians**, but more or less **directly serving Bulgarian ‘national’ policy**. Yet a third group of the émigré community remained **within the ranks of the brotherhoods**, but at the **Second Great Assembly** of this organization there was a split, after which a **Provisional Commission of the Macedonian Émigré Community in Bulgaria** was formed. At its founding congress, on December 2, 1921, it chose the title **Managing Committee of the Macedonian Federal Émigré Organization in Bulgaria**, which fought, with an insufficiently clear programme, for “a free and independent federal Macedonia”.

The subsequent developments are well known. The efforts to unite the Macedonian forces, as a result of the undermining involvement of the interested factors in the Balkans and Europe, led to even greater discord and to the establishment of many factions and organizations following different concepts and choosing various programme objectives and tasks, accompanied by even greater oppression of the Macedonian people in all the parts of the neighbouring monarchies where they lived. The emergence of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United) and the clarification of its national programme after 1933 played a highly significant role in the preparation for the crucial period which came with the Second World War.

The Position of the Macedonians towards the Establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes

The unification of peoples for their own protection and prosperity is undoubtedly a progressive integrative step. The Macedonians have always found themselves in historical situations that have impelled them to aspire towards such a unification. Bearing in mind the struggle of the Macedonians for their statehood from the 1870s to the start of the First World War, it is quite understandable why they reacted so resolutely against the way the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was established, no matter in which part of their dismembered land they lived.

Following the Treaties of Versailles and Neuilly, when the fate of Macedonia was finally sealed, the Macedonians started seeking new ways to gain freedom and defined their position towards the new Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. As early as June 1920, even the Vrhovist-oriented Central Committee of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO, VMRO) prepared a “directive for work in Macedonia”, in which it set out: “The aim of the Organization remains the same as before: winning freedom — in the form of autonomy or independence — for Macedonia within its ethnic and economic borders.”⁷³³

That is how the activity of Todor Aleksandrov and Aleksandar Protogerov started; it soon turned into a powerful armed force which had to be reckoned with, and not only in the neighbouring states. Incursions began inside the territories of the Vardar and even the Aegean part of Macedonia, involving armed actions against the greater-state assimilatory regimes.

It must be emphasized that IMRO underwent an evolution in its position and relations which was dictated by the circumstances. As a result, at the **1920 municipal elections in Yugoslavia**, Aleksandrov categorically recommended to the Macedonians **to vote for the candidates of the Communists**, as it was in the communist movement that he saw his ally in the struggle for the settlement of the “Macedonian question”.⁷³⁴ Taking into account the armed potential in the Balkans and the constellation of political forces, **Soviet Russia** showed special interest in

⁷³³*Makedoni ja. Sbornik ot dokument i i mat erial i*, Sof i ò, 1978, 658.

⁷³⁴Jovan Janev, „St avovi te na Ef ti mSprost ranov i Jovan Kír kovi k za avt onomi ja na Makedoni ja vo sost avot na jugosl ovenskat a f eder aci ja“, *Gl asnik*, HHř áá, 1-2, I NI , 1983, 78.

the activity of Aleksandrov and Protogerov's IMRO, and offered them moral and material assistance. Closer contacts and talks ensued, and an agreement was even proposed.⁷³⁵ Aleksandrov himself, in December 1923, proposed **a project for agreement between IMRO and the Soviet government**, which included the following:

The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, which represents the Macedonians fighting for national self-determination, political freedom and the greatest possible social justice, has as its aim:

Unification of Macedonia – partitioned by Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece in 1913 following the Peace Treaty of Bucharest and the 1919 Treaty of Neuilly – into a political unit which would later become an equal member of a Balkan federation or at least, in the first stage, of a Yugoslav federation.⁷³⁶

The negotiations were held in this spirit and their outcome was the signing of the **May Manifesto** and other accompanying documents in 1924.⁷³⁷ As a result, Aleksandrov was killed in Sofia that same year (the same happened to Protogerov somewhat later) and there was a dramatic split within the Organization. Yet this laid the groundwork for the foundation of **IMRO (United)** the following year, which was to become the most important proponent of the Macedonian national liberation struggle under the wing of the progressive movement — up to the organization's abolition a decade later.

These concepts were also in accord with the programme of the **Balkan Communist Federation**. The great majority of the Macedonian people stood on the side of “progressive forces” and this crucial factor in the Macedonian liberation movement was to lead to ultimate success, even though only in a part of the divided land. **The Balkan federation became the ideal of the Macedonian fighters.** Even after the change in the concepts of struggle (within the Comintern in 1935), which marked the start of the creation of the anti-fascist movement and, within its framework, of “the general popular front”, the slogan of the Balkan federation remained still strong in the consciousness and action of the Macedonians.

In 1923, vigorous discussions on the national question commenced within the progressive circles in the Balkans. Similar discussions were held in both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and even in Greece. The Macedonian national question was discussed with special attention. Even the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party worked out “theses on the Macedonian question”, and **discus-**

⁷³⁵Di ni t ar Vl ahov, *Memoari*, Skopje, 1970, 211-232.

⁷³⁶*Makedoni ja. Sbornik ot dokument i i mat eri jal i*, 676. See also Todor Aleksandrov's statement of August 1, 1924, concerning Federal Yugoslavia with a united Macedonia within it (*Prilozi za I l i nden*, ááá, 257).

⁷³⁷D-r I van Kat ar xi ev, *Vreme na zreeve. Makedonskot o nacional no prauawe mezu dvet e svet ski vojni (1919-1930)*, á, Skopje, 1977, 219-279.

sions concerning the federalist visions once again could frequently be heard in Macedonian émigré circles. The mouthpiece of the Ilinden Organization in Bulgaria, *Ilinden*, on August 26, 1923, asked in one of its headlines: ‘Yugoslav or Balkan Federation?’⁷³⁸ and gave the following answer: “...those who long for a federal Yugoslavia are right in one respect only: at the current moment, due to the ethnic struggle in present-day Yugoslavia, this federation can be a stage towards the common Balkan confederation, just as the autonomy of Serbian Macedonia can be the core around which Greek and Bulgarian Macedonia will be assembled”. For “once Macedonia wins independence, achieved even partially, once the first step towards a federation is made, the elimination of conflicts around Macedonia as far as Greece and Turkey are concerned, and the full independence of Macedonia, and also the pacification of the whole of the Balkans, will come only through a Balkan federation, in which Macedonia will take a central economic and cultural position.”

In circumstances when a **group of Macedonian intellectuals** in 1923 tried to establish a **legal Macedonian party in Yugoslavia** and form a **legal Macedonian movement** around it, when the Communist Party of Yugoslavia prepared itself to define its programme on the national question, the Croatian communist activist, Ante Ciliga, who had first-hand knowledge of the aspirations of the Macedonians, expressed, among other things, the discontent of the Macedonian people with the existing situation and stated before the Yugoslav progressive public that the Macedonians had “developed as an individual people in the course of the entire 19th century”.⁷³⁹ In another of his articles he wrote:

We want autonomy for Macedonia. All right. But we must clearly – in the resolution, too – emphasize that we do not consider Macedonia to be Serbian and that we are in favour of an independent Macedonia, and that we see in its autonomy the first step towards independence. Here a line must be drawn between us and Serbian Republicans who see in that autonomy the first step towards gradual Serbianization of Macedonia.⁷⁴⁰

The Belgrade middle-class press, however, was full of chauvinistic excitement and glorified **Serbia as ‘the Balkan Piedmont’**. Reacting to the writing of the Serbian press, Krste Misirkov responded, on September 2, 1923, with a polemic article entitled ‘Piedmont or Austria?’:⁷⁴¹ “Present-day Serbia is not the Piedmont but the Austria of the Balkan Peninsula. [...] Like Austria, which was a conglomerate of regions with different populations in terms of nationality and culture, so

⁷³⁸ „Š gosl avònska i li Bal kanska f eder aci ò?“ , *I l i ndenb*, ááá, 23, Sof i ò, 26.ř ááá.1923, 1.

⁷³⁹Mbt, „Samoodredjenje naroda u Jugoslaviji“, *Borba*, 30, Zagreb, 16.VIII.1923.

⁷⁴⁰Mbt, „Za jasnoću i odlučnost po nacionalnom pitanju“, *Borba*, 38, 18.X.1923.

⁷⁴¹K. Mi si r kov i , „P i emont i i li Avstri ò?“ , *I l i ndenb*, ááá, 24, 24.áH.1923, 1.

too present-day Yugoslavia is a conglomerate of such different geographical, historical and ethnic units with centrifugal tendencies.” Therefore, Misirkov recommended that Yugoslavia started “along the cultural road of concessions and equality in the state in order to create contentment and support among the population towards the state. In other words,” Misirkov wrote, “not oppression in the name of unity, but a federation of regions and nationalities in the name of freedom and equality — can save Yugoslavia from inevitable disaster.”

The federalist concept, however, had been present for a long time in the Macedonian movement. At this same period Dimitrija Čupovski, in his letter to Moscow *Pravda*, reacted to the Yugoslav-Bulgarian Accord in Niš of March 23, 1923, envisaging joint action against Macedonian revolutionary activities, and said: “In the name of the freedom and right of a people to be the master of its own destiny, the Macedonian revolutionaries cannot be left without support. The ideal of the Macedonians is not narrow, but revolutionary. We defend the independence of Macedonia together with the idea of the establishment of a Balkan People’s Federal Republic as the necessary condition.” As a result, Čupovski emphasized: “The liberation and independence of Macedonia is the first and greatest step in the realization of the Balkan Federation.”⁷⁴²

* * *

Following the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, many people abroad supported a “Yugoslav” solution to the Macedonian question in the Balkans. Here, for example, is the opinion of the prominent British **General Thomson**: “The solution which finally seems most effective to me is an autonomous Macedonia within the borders of a federal Yugoslavia.”⁷⁴³

Taking into account the actual situation in Yugoslavia and in the Balkans, and also the difficult position of the Macedonian people, **Krste Misirkov** replied strongly to Thomson:

We, the Macedonians, have been used to suffering under the most tyrannical regimes, to enduring the indifference of Europe towards our destiny and to dealing with cunning and brutal oppressors, but despite all of this we have never for a single moment doubted that one day we shall gain freedom. This faith did not abandon us even when, well-informed on Macedonian affairs, the English journals and politicians convinced us that Europe was not willing to add a free Macedonia to the existing newly-established states after the war. We believe in the fulfilment of our ideal, because only in an independent Macedonia will Europe find a means of thwarting new wars of world character, such as the last one.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴²D-r Bl ažd e Ri stovski , *Di mi t ri ja Čupovski (1878-1940)*..., áá, 330.

⁷⁴³„Gener . Tomsoni za Makedoni ò“, *Mi r b*, HHH, 7098, Sof i ò, 11. áá.1924, 2.

Misirkov did not nourish a very favourable opinion even of Slavic solidarity, in particular bearing in mind the history of Macedonia, and in his article entitled ‘Macedonia and the Prague Congress’⁷⁴⁵ he wrote: “The forthcoming congress of Slavonic ethnographers in Prague, where Macedonian ethnographers will not take part, as there is no Macedonian independent or autonomous state and, accordingly, there is no Macedonian capital with a Macedonian government, Macedonian academy of sciences and a Macedonian university, which would be able to send their own representatives to the congress, is nevertheless of considerable interest to us, Macedonians.” Referring above all to the Serbs and Bulgarians, Misirkov reacted strongly against the “oppressor Slavs” who “in Prague may forge new chains for our unfortunate fatherland, which, having been dismembered by Slavs and through the initiative of Slavs allied with non-Slavic peoples, having been heavily bound by Serbo-Bulgarian political accords, it would also be bound by the scholarly chains of the victor oppressors.” He then added: “Our ideal is not a Slavic ideal, but a general human one; we want to be freed from your Slavism and make our fatherland not a similar Slavic but simply a cultured state, in which every village and every human group in this village or town will have absolute freedom of religious and national self-determination.”

The central question concerning Balkan peace and understanding in the period between the two world wars was precisely the question of Serbo-Bulgarian (later Yugoslav-Bulgarian) relations. It was, in turn, directly dependent on the question of Macedonia’s destiny and position. As a result, the Macedonian press of the time very frequently analysed those relations, and **Krste P. Misirkov** devoted a number of articles to them, competently presenting the Macedonian position: “The Serbs and Bulgarians should know that we, the Macedonians, have suffered the most and are still suffering because of Serbo-Bulgarian disagreement, and can hence help the most in the attainment of a permanent Serbo-Bulgarian reconciliation and the well-being of the whole of southern Slavdom, if we are but granted greater freedom in the hammering out of general south-Slav prosperity.” For this reason, Misirkov appealed again: “Give us the right and freedom to respect ourselves, our own language, our own past, as we respect you, your present and past, and we shall build a permanent bridge between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.”⁷⁴⁶

Speaking about the situation and role of the Macedonians in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, and pointing to the means of reconciliation,⁷⁴⁷ Misirkov first addressed the Bulgarians: “[A]llow us to freely call and feel ourselves Macedonians,

⁷⁴⁴K. Mi si r kovī –makedonecī , „Naš at a vōr a“, *Mi r ъ*, HHH, 7139, 31.ááá.1924, 1.

⁷⁴⁵K. Mi si r kovī , „Makedoni ò i P r a ž ki ò kongr esī “, *20 iol i ŭ*, á, 9, Sof i ò, 8.ř á.1924, 3.

⁷⁴⁶K. Mi si r kovī , „Razdor i l i i razbi r at òl st vo“, *Mi r ъ*, HHH, 7354, 22.Háá.1924, 1.

⁷⁴⁷K. Mi si r kovī , „I Ī t Ā ĩ na pri mi reni et o“, *I l i ndenb, ř* , 5, 30.á.1925, 2.

without the addition Bulgarians”, and then the Serbs: “[I]f you want us to love Yugoslavia as we love Bulgaria, give us the right and freedom to call ourselves simply Macedonians, without attaching the Serb name to it. As Macedonians we want to love equally the states in which we live as free and equal citizens and at the same time to love our long-suffering and dismembered fatherland.” He asked the Serbs why the Macedonian, as “a good and loyal Yugoslav citizen has no right at the same time to feel himself a Macedonian and also to be interested in the past, present and future of all the parts of Macedonia?”, and warned: “In both Bulgaria and Serbia they should remember one thing, that in Macedonia there lives a population with a passionate patriotic feeling and with a specific national consciousness, which must be correctly taken into consideration and employed reasonably for both the benefit of the local population and the benefit of the Slavic states in which the Macedonians live, and also in the interest of South-Slav solidarity.”

Summarizing his activity and the activity of his generation, Misirkov pointed to his book *Za makedonkite raboti* (On Macedonian Matters, 1903) and his study *Za značenjeto na moravskoto ili resavskoto narečje za sovremenata i istoriskata etnografija na Balkanskiot Poluostrvo* (On the Significance of the Morava and Resava Dialects to Contemporary and Historical Ethnography on the Balkan Peninsula, 1897), as proofs that “a part of the Macedonian intelligentsia sought and found other means of struggle — namely independent Macedonian scholarly thought and Macedonian national consciousness”. Therefore, he wrote: “I do not regret that I spoke out in favour of Macedonian separatism as long as 28 years ago. This was and remains for me the only solution, the best road along which the Macedonian intelligentsia could fulfil and will fulfil its debt towards its own fatherland and towards our people!”

However, speaking in the name of all the Macedonians, Misirkov wanted to be clearly understood:

[M]ay you forgive me, but I, as a Macedonian, put the interests of my fatherland and my compatriots in the first place, and only then the interests of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. I am a Macedonian, with Macedonian consciousness, and being that I have my own views of the past, present and future of my fatherland and of the whole of southern Slavdom, and therefore I wish that we, too, the Macedonians, be asked about all the questions affecting us and our neighbours, and that not everything be accomplished through agreements between Bulgaria and Serbia concerning us, but without us. May everyone interested be convinced that the Macedonian will find enough tact, vision and self-sacrifice for the achievement of general prosperity in the Balkans; it will suffice that the national and personal dignity of the Macedonian is respected.⁷⁴⁸

⁷⁴⁸K. Misirkov, „Makedonski nacionalizmi“, *Mir*, HHHÁ, 7417, 12.ááá.1925, 1.

When the semi-official Bulgarian newspaper *Svobodna Rěč* attacked him, insulting him by calling him “A man who still does not know his own nationality”,⁷⁴⁹ Krste Misirkov reacted very strongly with regard to the position of the Macedonians in Serbo-Bulgarian relations by writing an article entitled ‘**Self-termination of the Macedonians**’.⁷⁵⁰ He wrote:

Because it is we, Macedonians, above all, who suffer from Serbo-Bulgarian disagreement, it is our obligation to seek and find the means and way of reconciliation. This has made us ‘not know’ our nationality to this day and to say to both the Serbs and Bulgarians: forget your greater-Serbian or greater-Bulgarian idea, give up imposing upon us your nationalism and patriotism, based largely on the preference of your interests before ours. Let us have our own understanding of our position towards you and your dispute concerning us and our fatherland, and also of the means by which general south-Slavic prosperity will be achieved. Let us have our own, Macedonian national feelings and develop our own Macedonian culture, as we have been doing for centuries, even when our fatherland and yours did not form part of the same state. [...] The consciousness and feeling that I am a Macedonian should stand higher than anything else in the world. The Macedonian should not merge and lose his individuality, living between Bulgarians and Serbs. We can assume that there is a closeness between Serbian, Bulgarian and Macedonian interests, but everything must be evaluated from the Macedonian point of view.

Because, in his understanding,

[i]t is the Macedonian national feeling, it is the historical call of the Macedonian which he can fulfil only as a free and equal citizen of Yugoslavia who is allowed to think, feel, speak and act as a Macedonian.

This was Misirkov’s position and his vision of Macedonia and the states among which it was partitioned, and his position towards Yugoslavia as he saw it and as he wanted it to be. And this was not an isolated opinion and feeling; he always spoke not only in his personal name, but also as a popular tribune who was widely respected and trusted.

* * *

The **federalist concept** was not only the conviction of **communists, federalists and Ilinden fighters**. It was also fully accepted by the Protogerovist⁷⁵¹ wing of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization after 1928, seeing a solution in a **South-Slav (Yugoslav) federation** with Macedonia as its equal

⁷⁴⁹ „E di nĩ čoveōkĩ , koàto oē e ne si znae narodnost Ā a“, *Svobodna rěč*, áá, 313, Sof i ò, 14. ááá.1925, 2.

⁷⁵⁰ K. Mi si r kovĩ , „S amopr ò del eni et o na makedonci t ò“, *Mi r ě*, HHHá, 7428, 25. ááá.1925, 1.

⁷⁵¹ Related to the followers of Aleksandar Protogerov (translator’s note).

member. "The Macedonian people," it was written in the programmatic article of the *Makedonska Pravda*⁷⁵² newspaper, "should be ready in any new situation, following any new changes in Greece, Yugoslavia or Bulgaria, to speak out, to express their will and participate there through their active presence." The newspaper, it emphasized, "will cultivate the idea of a Balkan federation as the only means, at this moment, for the pacification of the Balkans, a federation within the framework of which it [Macedonia] would be free and happy". The newspaper "will pave the road for a federation of the South Slavs on the basis of full equality and equal respect of the rights of all peoples and for the creation, amidst the present Yugoslav chaos, of a free state with free autonomous regions."

But when certain steps were made towards a "Serbo-Bulgarian agreement", the newspaper of the Protogerovists clearly stated: "...until the Macedonian question is resolved in the correct way, until that moment, any sincere agreement and brotherly cooperation between the peoples of Serbia and Bulgaria will be inconceivable". Therefore, continues the newspaper: "Our efforts, i.e. the efforts of all the wronged and oppressed peoples and ethnic minorities in the territory of present-day 'Yugoslavia' will have to be directed towards the destruction of Serbian dictatorship and the introduction of a new popular authority. *Only such a genuine popular authority will be capable of resolving not only the Macedonian problem, but also the great problem of the unification of all the South Slavs into a huge, popular, federal South-Slav republic without dictators and hegemonists.* Our Macedonian question will find its final solution within the framework of that popular federal republic and *Macedonia will be free.*"

The Protogerovists were particularly interested in the then emerging **new Yugoslav youth revolutionary organization, URO**, whose final ideal within its programme was "an alliance of South-Slav people's republics from the Adriatic to the Black Sea", and whose "greatest efforts" were directed "against dictatorship and against *Serbia's hegemony*". The newspaper *Makedonska Pravda* wrote that "URO is not only against dictatorship and its main proponent, King Alexander, but that it is also against centralism and in favour of federalism... Centralism is a means for the forceful imposition of greater-Serbian hegemony over the Croats, Prečans,⁷⁵³ Macedonians and other peoples in Yugoslavia. It is clear to everyone that unitarism leads to catastrophe."⁷⁵⁴ As a result, the newspaper supported the concept of Svetozar Pribičević, envisaging a Yugoslavia with "a federalist state organization on the basis of historical-political individualities" which would be

⁷⁵² „Naš i òt ĩ pí tĭ , *Makedonska pravda*, á, 1, S of i ò, 3.áH.1933, 1.

⁷⁵³ The population of what is today Vojvodina in Serbia (translator's note).

⁷⁵⁴ „I deol ogi òt a na U.R.O.“, *Makedonska pravda*, á, 2, 10.áH.1933, 3; „U.R.O. i f eder aci òt a“, *Makedonska pravda*, á, 3, 17.áH.1933, 3.

constituted of **seven federal units**: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Vojvodina and Macedonia,⁷⁵⁵ the same concept envisaged by URO.

Yet the Protogerovists openly stated their fear of integration as a “greater-Serbian idea”. *Makedonska Pravda* adhered to its “final ideal: *Yugoslav federation with Macedonia as an equal state unit*”,⁷⁵⁶ but the way in which it understood it was explained in its reply to a reader: “Our ideal, the ideal of the honest-thinking and progressive Macedonian émigré community, and of all good people of the Balkans, *is and should be a Balkan federation*. For only through a Balkan federation one can reconcile the cultural, economic, commercial and political interests of the Balkan peoples and surmount their rivalries... We speak of a Yugoslav federation as *a stage towards the future Balkan federation*, which would be easier to achieve after the realization of the first one.”

In connection with the expression “integral Yugoslavia”, the newspaper makes it clear: “Integrationism is a greater-Serbian idea. Federalism is a Yugoslav idea.” However, supporting **Dimitar Vlahov**’s position in *Makedonsko Delo*, the mouthpiece of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United), concerning the question of “‘Integral Yugoslavia’ or a Balkan federation”,⁷⁵⁷ the Protogerovist *Makedonska Pravda* wrote: “*The federation, whatever it may be, makes any sense for us only if we can see our sacred ideal achieved through it — the freedom of our fatherland. A thousand federations would mean nothing to us without this ideal. We are in favour not of an integral but a free Yugoslav republic, in which the republic of Macedonia will figure as a fully free and equal member, as the only means for the pacification of the Balkans.*”⁷⁵⁸ In this context, the newspaper accepted URO’s demands: “a republic, federation, socialization and popular authority”.⁷⁵⁹

* * *

Macedonian liberation thought in the 1930s moved within the same or a similar framework. The ‘**autonomists**’ of **Vančo Mihajlov** indeed fought for a “united Macedonia”, but they did this with an unclear national programme and with a

⁷⁵⁵ „Novata političeska programa na Sv. Pribičevi či“, *Makedonska pravda*, á, 3, 17.áH.1933, 1.

⁷⁵⁶ St. Kirilovi, „Prvata stípkakí nī Bīlgarsko-ōgoslavònsko sblizeni e“, *Makedonska pravda*, á, 4, 24.áH.1933, 3.

⁷⁵⁷ D. Vlahovi, „Integral na ē goslavi ò ili Balkanska federaci ò“, *Makedonsko delo*, ř ááá, 168/169, 25.H.1932, 6-7.

⁷⁵⁸ „Integral na ē goslavi ò li?“, *Makedonska pravda*, á, 6, 8.H.1933, 3.

⁷⁵⁹ „Revolòci onnata borba na U.R.O.“, *Makedonska pravda*, á, 6, 8.H.1933, 3.

pro-fascist political orientation, as a result of which, after 1934, that section of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization almost ceased to be a significant factor in the genuine Macedonian movement. In this period the masses were attracted to the already proven national programme and concept of the **Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United)** and also to the programme principles of the **Comintern** and the **Communist parties in the Balkans**, which nevertheless retained, as their final goal, a **Balkan federation**, even though not all of them were equally sympathetic to it. The Seventh Congress of the Comintern adopted a directive for the maintenance of the Versailles borders and for the organization of an **anti-fascist popular-front movement**. Yet the Macedonians never sincerely accepted that part of the directive concerning the preservation of the Versailles partition, and the Macedonian émigré community, particularly in overseas countries, never adhered to it in practice.

The Resolution of the Comintern on the Macedonian Nation and the Macedonian Language (1934)

The Macedonian people, the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language have never demanded from anyone, and there have been no reasons to demand it, any official recognition of their existence. Recognition can be demanded for a state or an institution, but not for a nation or a language. The Macedonian people has waged a continuous struggle for the affirmation of its national entity for a century and a half, and within this framework, for its own language and its own culture. In the process of this struggle for affirmation there have been various acts by different individuals, institutions, organizations and states that have significantly helped the Macedonian cultural and national development and its affirmation at national, Slavic, Balkan or international level. The resolution of the Comintern, although published as a resolution of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United), was undoubtedly the most significant international acknowledgement of the Macedonian national individuality, which had very favourable consequences for its development and affirmation. It was not a founding act by some international arbiter, albeit within the framework of the communist movement. It sanctioned the historical development of the Macedonian people, which itself imposed that acknowledgement.

* * *

The Comintern decision of January 11, 1934, did not come suddenly and unexpectedly. Immediately after the First World War, the Communist movement started making efforts to resolve the 'Macedonian question' in its entirety and in its historical context. Of special significance was the year 1923, when great efforts were made to look at this question **as a national one as well**. The Balkan Communist Federation, as early as its Fifth Conference in Moscow (December 8-12, 1922) expressed its dissatisfaction with the treatment of Macedonia by the Balkan communist parties, and soon afterwards decided to separate the party organization in Macedonia from the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) and to connect it directly to the Balkan Communist Federation (BCF).⁷⁶⁰ That Macedonia did not receive the appropriate aid from either the CPY or the Bulgarian

Communist Party, nor from the BCF, was confirmed by the Macedonian delegate at the CPY Second Conference (May 9-12, 1923), Stefan Popivanov.⁷⁶¹ Its resolution, among other things, stated that the population in Macedonia wanted its own “autonomous and independent state”, in the spirit of the principle of “the full acknowledgement of the slogan on the right to self-determination of nations, including secession”.⁷⁶² The subsequent plenum of the CPY Central Party Council (May 13-16, 1923) went even further than that, and, accepting that “the Macedonian question can be decided only in a Balkan federation”, concluded that “the Macedonians are an ethnographic transition between the Serbs, Bulgarians and Greeks”.⁷⁶³ This view was also accepted by the Comintern, and it was no chance that K. Radek’s report at the Third Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Comintern (June 12-23, 1923) criticized the Bulgarian Communist Party, underlining that “Macedonia, populated by peasants, of whom it is difficult to say whether they are Serbs or Bulgarians, has long ago served as an object of dispute between Serbia and Bulgaria”.⁷⁶⁴

It was in that same year, 1923, that a group of Macedonian intellectuals made an unsuccessful attempt at organizing a **legal Macedonian party** around which a legal Macedonian movement would develop in Yugoslavia.⁷⁶⁵ At approximately the same time, several numbers of the illegal newspaper *Iskra* were printed in Veles.⁷⁶⁶ Of special importance was CPY’s appeal for a public discussion of the national question in Yugoslavia through the pages of the newspaper *Radnik–Delavec* (May 31, 1923). Very significant views were published in the Zagreb party newspaper *Borba*. The articles of the Croatian communist Ante Ciliga were highly illustrative; he had the opportunity of being directly acquainted with the true aspirations of the Macedonians, as his wife, Dr Ljuba Volčeva, came from Prilep; together they had stayed for some time in the Soviet Union. In his extensive article ‘The Self-determination of the Peoples of Yugoslavia’, Ciliga writes:

Of the Slavic peoples that live in Yugoslavia there are also the Macedonians. Throughout the 19th century they developed as an independent people. All the efforts of the Serbian bourgeoisie to make them Serbian have so far failed. They are a separate

⁷⁶⁰J. Vrčinac, „Prva, Druga i Treća konferencija KPJ (prema zapisnicima, rezolucijama i drugim materijalima sa svih konferencija)“, in: *Istorija XX vijeka*, knj. 1, Beograd, 1959, 250.

⁷⁶¹Kostadin Paluški, *Šestogodišnja komunistička partija i makedonski narod 1919-1945*, Sofija, 1985, 89.

⁷⁶²*Ibid.*, 91.

⁷⁶³Dušan Lukač, *Radnički pokret u Jugoslaviji i nacionalno pitanje 1918-1941*, Beograd, 1972, 107.

⁷⁶⁴Rasui renni ū plenum I spolni el’bnogo komitet a Kommunističeskogo internacionala (12-23 i junja 1923 goda), Moskva, 1923, 257.

⁷⁶⁵Kostadin Paluški, *op. cit.*, 104.

⁷⁶⁶Dr Blažeristovski, *Kočo Racin. Istorisko-literaturni razgovori. Prilozi za razviti okot na makedonska kulturno-nacionalna misla*, Skopje, 1983, 47-48.

national entity and they should be granted all the rights deriving from it. Our movement made a mistake when it did not as early as 1919 start issuing publications in the Macedonian language for the Macedonian population. Opening schools in the Macedonian language should also be insisted on. The population itself will then decide whether they want to send their children to schools with instruction in Serbian or Macedonian.⁷⁶⁷

Accordingly, there were no dilemmas as to whether or not there was a separate Macedonian nation;⁷⁶⁸ the important thing was to accept it as a reality and enable its free development. Even though Ciliga was in favour of an independent Macedonia, at that moment he supported Macedonia's autonomy within the borders of Yugoslavia, as "we see in its autonomy the first step towards independence".⁷⁶⁹

At the Sixth Conference of the BCF (December 1923) the Bulgarian communist activist, Vasil Kolarov, said that the Macedonians "want to be united into a Macedonian nation",⁷⁷⁰ and the resolution adopted at the Vitoša Conference of the BCP (May 1924) expressed concepts which are not far away from this tendency.⁷⁷¹

Although not sufficiently clearly, the ethnic individuality of the Macedonian people was also reflected in the pamphlet printed (in cooperation with Stefan Popivanov) and signed by Kosta Novaković, entitled *Macedonia to the Macedonians! The Land to the Farmers!* (1924) as a publication of the Independent Workers' Party of Yugoslavia in Belgrade. It was also no coincidence that the resolution of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern (1924) recommended the CPY to fight for **self-determination of the peoples of Yugoslavia** with a demand "for the secession of Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia from the body of the Yugoslav state and for the establishment of independent republics of these regions".⁷⁷² In the Platform of the CPY Central Committee for the municipal elections (1926), the communists were advised to point to "the concrete facts of national oppression: the ban on the Macedonian language and schools, the ban on Macedonian names under the State Protection Law", etc.⁷⁷³

⁷⁶⁷Mbt [Ante Ciliga' pseudonym], „Samoodredjenje naroda u Jugoslaviji“, *Borba*, II, 30, Zagreb, 16.VIII.1923.

⁷⁶⁸This was also confirmed by the Veles party activist hiding behind the initial Z in his article „Naci onal ne bor be u Makedoni ji“, *Radni k–Delavec*, áá, 57, Beogr ad, 1.ř áá.1923. Another important contribution in this respect was the article written by an unsigned author from Veles, „Naci onal no pi t awe u Makedoni ji“, *Radni k–Delavec*, áá, 76, Beogr ad, 5.áH.1923.

⁷⁶⁹Mbt, „Za jasnoću i odlučnost u nacionalnom pitanju“, *Borba*, áá, 38, 18.H.1923. See also the previous issue of this newspaper (October 11, 1923).

⁷⁷⁰Kost adi n P al eš ut ski, *op. cit.*, 119.

⁷⁷¹Geor gi V. Di mi tr ov, *St anovi e e i pol i t i ka na BKP po makedonski я vъпрос*, Bl agoevgr ad, 1971, 31-32.

⁷⁷²*I st orijski arhi v Komuni st i čke part i je Jugosl avi je*, 2, Beogr ad, 1949, 421.

⁷⁷³*I zvor i za i st ori ju radni čkogpokret ai revol uci je u Crnoj Gori (1918-1945)*, Ser i ja á, kw. 1 (1918-1929). Odabr ao i pri redi o dr Jovan R. Bojovi ć, Ti togr ad, 1971, 496-497. The same

The official party documents stated that in the Vardar section of Macedonia there lived “630,000 Macedonians”,⁷⁷⁴ and on August 23, 1926, the secretary of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia for Macedonia insisted on including a special item about the national question in Macedonia on the agenda for the forthcoming plenum of the CPY Central Committee, where the reporter would be the Central Committee member from Macedonia.⁷⁷⁵ The resolution concerning the activities on the renewal of the Macedonian national revolutionary movement, adopted by the Regional Conference of the Communist Party in Macedonia (1926), called for a struggle “for the most basic cultural and political rights of the Macedonian people, such as the right to the Macedonian language in schools, in books, in names, and the right to a name and an organization of the Macedonian people in Yugoslavia”.⁷⁷⁶ All this was a reflection of internal developments and of the aspirations of the Macedonian people, which at that moment were favourably received only by the avant-garde of the workers’ movement. These facts were undoubtedly well known to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (July 1928) and to the Eighth Conference of the BCF, held shortly afterwards. All this found concrete expression in the formulations of the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in Dresden (October-November 1928), where the delegate from Macedonia, Kočo Racin, took an active part.⁷⁷⁷

The foundation of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United) in 1925 marked a new stage in the Macedonian liberation movement.⁷⁷⁸ Even though in the beginning it could not openly and clearly proclaim its national programme, with its consolidation, the national component became more and more

views were expressed by the Macedonian communists themselves in a 1927 leaflet published by *Makedonsko delo* and *Balkanska federacija*, and reprinted in Zagreb *Borba* of January 1, 1928. Here is an extract from this document: “The Macedonians have been deprived of all basic civil and political rights, and they have been most terribly oppressed nationally by the hegemonistic regime. In the courts, in the schools and in the administrative authorities *they have no right to their own language. Their children cannot even pray to God in their own language*” [D-r Ivan Katarić, *Vreme na zreewe. Makedonsko tonaci onal no prauawe mežu dvete vojni (1919-1930)*, á, Skopje, 1977, 422]. In 1928 the newspaper *Makedonsko delo* published an article entitled ‘For the Freedom of Macedonia and Montenegro’, also reprinted in *Borba*, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, where, among other things, a specific demand was put forward for “the introduction of the language the Macedonian people speak in all the schools and institutions of the society” (*Ibid.*, 425).

⁷⁷⁴Kosta Novaković, *Makedonija Makedonci ma! Zemq oradni ci ma!*, Čačak, 1966, 52.

⁷⁷⁵Kostadin Palčevski, *op. cit.*, 179.

⁷⁷⁶Marija Miloševska, „Značeen dokument vo zaostavnata na Kočo Racin“, *Delo* 74, HAAA, 1-2, Štip, 1986, 63.

⁷⁷⁷D-r Blažeristovski, *Kočo Racin...*, 17-20.

⁷⁷⁸Ivan Katarić, „VMRO (Obednet a), pojava, razvoj i dejnost“, in: *CK na VMRO(Ob), Predavnicite na makedonsko delo*, Redakcija i komentari Ivan Katarić, Kultura, Skopje, 1983, 5-56.

emphatic. Starting from 1928 the Macedonian national entity was also accepted by the CPY and some other parties in the Balkans. This was increasingly reflected in the pages of the journal *Makedonsko Delo*.⁷⁷⁹ An organization within the Macedonian progressive movement which came to particular prominence was the **Goce Delčev Macedonian Popular Student Group** (1930), active in the Pirin section of Macedonia and among the Macedonian émigrés (mostly in Bulgaria). In the period 1931-1934, it continually published several printed mouthpieces (*Makedonski Studentski List*, *Makedonska Studentska Tribuna* and *Makedonska Mladež*), and the newspaper *Makedonsko Zname* (1932-1934) became the unofficial legal mouthpiece of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United).⁷⁸⁰

As far as the Aegean section of Macedonia was concerned, it was difficult for any Macedonian group to establish itself more firmly, but IMRO (United), supported by the Communist Party of Greece, in the period 1913-1935, through the newspaper *Rizospastis*, strongly and clearly expressed the historical ideals of the Macedonian people.⁷⁸¹ As for the Vardar part of Macedonia, which was also harshly oppressed in ethnic terms, except in the early period, IMRO (United) could not establish itself, as it had no support from anyone. The great legal proceedings against the leaders and adherents of this organization in 1929 showed its genuine national concepts for the future development of the Macedonian people and the Balkans in general.⁷⁸² The year 1932 saw the start of activity in Skopje and the whole of the Vardar section of Macedonia by the **Macedonian Youth Revolutionary Organization (MORO)**, which attracted virtually all the more prominent young activists, who were later to stand at the head of the national liberation movement.⁷⁸³ The **Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in Macedonia**, led by Kočo Racin, was founded in 1933 in Skopje.⁷⁸⁴ This was a new step forward towards the affirmation of Macedonian national thought and

⁷⁷⁹D-r I van Kat ar xi ev, *Vreme na zreeve. Makedonskot o nacionalno prauawe mežu dvet e vojni (1919-1930)*, á-áá, Kul t ur a, Skopje, 1977.

⁷⁸⁰D-r Bl až e Ri st ovski, *Makedonski ot narodi makedonskat anacija...*, áá, 481-560; D-r Bl až e Ri st ovski, *Port ret i i procesi od makedonskat alit erat urnai naci onal nai st ori ja*, ááá, Kul t ur a, Skopje, 1990, 293-318.

⁷⁸¹*Makedonskot o prauawe na st rani cit e od „Rizospast is“ mežu dvet e vojni*. I zbor i redakci ja Josi f P opovski, Kul t ur a, Skopje, 1982.

⁷⁸²Todor G. Zograf ski i Di mč e A. Zograf ski, *KPJ i VMRO (Obedi net a) vo Vardarska Makedoni ja vo peri odot 1920-1930*, I NI, Skopje, 1974; D-r I van Kat ar xi ev, *Vreme na zreeve...*, á; D-r Bl až e Ri st ovski, *Kočo Raci n. I st orisko-lit erat urni i st raž uvawa. Pri loži za razvit okot na makedonskat a kul t urno-naci onal na mi sla*, Makedonska kni ga, Skopje, 1983, 32-33.

⁷⁸³D-r Bl až e Ri st ovski, *Kočo Raci n...*, 59-176.

⁷⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 62-127; *I legal ni ot pečat na KP Jvo Vardarska Makedoni ja mežu dvet e svet ski vojni*, tom áá, kni ga 2. P odgot vi l d-r I van Kat ar xi ev, Komuni st, Skopje, 1983, 39-55.

action, while the foundation of the **Vardar Macedonian Cultural-Educational Society** in Zagreb (1934)⁷⁸⁵ represented probably the most important and most enduring Macedonian association which fought for the affirmation of Macedonian national individuality and of the Macedonian language as a literary standard in Vardar Macedonia.

All this indicated that Macedonian national consciousness was already a consciousness of the masses of the Macedonian people in all the sections of divided Macedonia, and that all the actors fighting for territory in this part of the world had to reckon with this fact. Even the Vrhovist Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, from 1932 onwards, started to give way before this option and in the Pirin region had to conduct a policy of Macedonian ethnic individuality, and even introduced a special subject in the schools (**Macedonian history**) and envisaged the introduction of **instruction in the Macedonian language**.⁷⁸⁶

In 1933, however, there was a split in Sofia within the Regional Committee of IMRO (United) for Macedonia under Bulgaria, when **Vasil Hadžikimov** was revealed as a provocateur, planted by the police, and refused to agree with the rest of the members “that the Macedonians are a separate people and that the Macedonian people from Pirin Macedonia is under national oppression”.⁷⁸⁷

At the same time the newspaper *Makedonsko Zname* took an even firmer position and openly declared: “The Macedonian progressive movement is a national one, as its goal is the national liberation of Macedonia. It is not a party movement, nor a movement of a particular group or class, but according to its character it is broadly popular and democratic, as its very goal (the national liberation of Macedonia) is a broadly popular and democratic task. The progressive Macedonian movement supports a united front consisting, in addition to the other subjugated peoples, of the oppressed classes of the ruling nations, but this by no means indicates that it gives priority to social rather than national questions.”⁷⁸⁸

On January 15, 1934, there was a ‘session’ of the secessionist and fictive ‘**Action Committee of the Macedonian Progressive Movement**’, headed by Vasil Hadžikimov, which “expelled” the five most active leaders of IMRO (United) among the Macedonian émigrés in Bulgaria and in the Pirin region.⁷⁸⁹ On February

⁷⁸⁵D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Projavi i profili od makedonska a literaturna istorija...*, 2, 1982, 159-191.

⁷⁸⁶D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonski ot narod i makedonska a nacija...*, áá, 550-555.

⁷⁸⁷Angel Di nevi, *Bugarska a rabotnička partija (k) pred sudot na istorijat a...*, á, 38 – manuscript in the Archives of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Arhiv na MANU) and also in the Archives Section of the Institute of National History (Arhivno oddelenie na INI), S1. á. 32/1.

⁷⁸⁸*Makedonsko zname*, áá, 17, Sofið, 14. áá. 1933, 2.

⁷⁸⁹„Rezolucija“, *Makedonska borba*, á, 2, Sofið, 25. áá. 1934, 2.

5, 1934, it started printing its own mouthpiece, *Makedonska Borba*, where it defined its counter-position very clearly: “There is no Macedonian nation, as there is no national oppression in the Petrič region. There is only a Macedonian people as a political whole consisting of the national groups: Bulgarians, Turks, Aromanians, Greeks and Serbs.”⁷⁹⁰ Hadžikimov designated the activity of the Regional Committee of IMRO (United) as “red Vrhovism” and publicly denounced its members, as a result of which “many went underground and the police started pursuing some of them”.⁷⁹¹ There was a sharp polemic between *Makedonska Borba*, on the one hand, and *Makedonsko Zname* and *Makedonska Mladež*, on the other, which lasted until the coup of the Zveno Group in Bulgaria. Shortly thereafter, all progressive publications, including *Makedonsko Zname* and *Makedonska Mladež*, were banned.⁷⁹²

In those circumstances and confrontations, the Comintern was impelled to declare its position. In 1932, the Macedonian Dino Ćosev gave a lecture in Moscow on the distinct Macedonian national consciousness.⁷⁹³ The question was also studied in the highest institutions of the Comintern. In the autumn of 1933, Dimitar Vlahov and Georgi Karadžov arrived in Moscow and took part in a number of meetings and conferences, after which, on January 11, 1934, the Political Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Comintern adopted its final and historic decision on the Macedonian nation.⁷⁹⁴

This was indeed an inevitable acknowledgement of the actual situation, imposed by the development of the Macedonian people itself, but at the same time it was **the first official recognition of the Macedonian national entity on the international scene**, which had an exceptionally beneficial influence on the subsequent development of the Macedonian national liberation struggle and affirmation. The Macedonians thus not only secured support from the Comintern as a leading institution, but also from the individual communist and workers’ parties in the world, and, most importantly, from the parties within the states that controlled Macedonia.

The text of this historic document was prepared in the period December 20, 1933 – January 7, 1934, by the Balkan Secretariat of the Comintern. It was accepted by the Political Secretariat in Moscow on January 11, 1934, and approved by the Executive Committee of the Comintern. It was published for the first time

⁷⁹⁰*Ibid.*

⁷⁹¹Angel Di ne v, *op. cit.*, 38.

⁷⁹²„Makedonsko zname“ e spre“, *Makedonsko zname*, ááá, 31.ř áá.1934, 1.

⁷⁹³According to his own words, in Sofia, in May 1967.

⁷⁹⁴Di ni tar Vl ahov, *Memoari*, Skopje, 1970, 356-358; M-r Spi ri don Bl agoev, „Š eeset godi ni od Rezol uci jat a za makedonskot o pr aš awe i VMRO(Ob) na Komuni sti čkat a i nter naci onal a“, *Večer*, 15-16.á.1994, 25.

in the April issue of *Makedonsko Delo* under the title ‘The Situation in Macedonia and the Tasks of IMRO (United)’.⁷⁹⁵

After replying to those who, even within the progressive movement, denied the existence of a separate Macedonian nation, the Resolution, among other things, stated:

The bourgeoisie of the ruling nations in the three imperialist states among which Macedonia is partitioned, tries to camouflage its national oppression, denying the national features of the Macedonian people and the existence of the Macedonian nation.

Commenting on the situation of the Macedonian people in Macedonia’s three parts and the position of those states towards the national ideals of the Macedonians, the text emphasized:

Bulgarian chauvinists, exploiting the kinship between the Macedonian and Bulgarian languages, claim that the Macedonians are Bulgarians, and in this way try to justify their control of the Petrič region and their policy of annexation extending to the whole of Macedonia.

Stating the aims and tasks of IMRO (United), the Resolution made it clear:

In waging its struggle against the dismemberment and subjugation of the Macedonian people and against all forms of cultural, social and economic oppression, and for national liberation and unification of all the parts of Macedonia, IMRO (United) should reveal the true purpose of all speculations aiming to deny the Macedonians their character of a nation and prevent them from pervading their own environment.

The extensive text of this Resolution continued by unmasking the role of “the Mihajlovists as faithful agents of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie and of Italian fascism” and pointed to “the revolutionary struggle of the Macedonian labouring masses for their own liberation” from the ruling states, concluding that “the struggle for a **united and independent republic of the Macedonian labouring masses** is not only the work of the latter but also of the working class and the peasants of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece, fighting under the leadership of the class organizations of the revolutionary proletariat.”

Enumerating the weaknesses of IMRO (United) itself in the three parts of Macedonia, the Resolution issued the following directives:

IMRO (United) should become a mass organization of workers from the whole of Macedonia, guiding them in the struggle against their subjugation by the

⁷⁹⁵ „Pol ož eni et o v Makedoni ò i zadači te na VMRO (Obedi nena). Edna rezol ô ci ò na CK na VMRO (Obed.)“, *Makedonsko del o*, ř ááá, 185, [P ar i ž], Apr i l 1934, 1-2.

Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek bourgeoisie and landowners and their fascist governments, and for their national liberation and unification.

IMRO (United) should organize and direct the struggle against any manifestation of national oppression, against any exclusive law affecting the right of the Macedonian masses to use their own mother tongue in all the institutions of government and the society, and for their freedom to study in it and publish books.

After emphasizing the relevant economic factors, the text pointed out:

In this struggle the main slogan of IMRO (United) should be *the right of the Macedonian people to self-determination, including the right to secession from the subjugator states and the winning of a united and independent republic of the Macedonian labouring masses.*

Despite the fact that this was formally a Resolution of IMRO (United), it was a document adopted by the Comintern, which was immediately published in all the mouthpieces of this international communist centre. It was printed in different languages and was understood as a right of the Macedonian people, but also as an obligation of the communist parties and organizations in neighbouring Balkan countries to help the justified struggle of the Macedonians for liberation and unification. This was at the same time the first truly effective support for the centuries-old struggle of the Macedonian people; as a result, they oriented themselves towards the international workers' movement which inspired them with faith in a righteous victory.

Furthermore, it was the External Bureau of the Bulgarian Communist Party that tried "to urge Slavic scholars from Moscow and Kiev to work out a plan for the creation of a Macedonian literary language".⁷⁹⁶ In June 1935, Aleksandar S. Veličkov in Kiev wrote a letter to Petar Iskrov, member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in Moscow and a Macedonian, in which, among other things, he wrote:

There are several professors working in the field of Slavonic linguistics here: Bulakhovsky, Grunsky, Drinov and others... Bulakhovsky and Drinov are also well-known abroad. I talked to these Slavic scholars and they promised to write a number of scholarly studies on various questions concerning different Slavonic dialects on the Balkan Peninsula.

Then Veličkov passed on to the concrete problem:

We have focussed on the scholarly analysis of the following subject: 'Is the Macedonian language an individual Slavonic language or is it only a variation (speech form) of the Bulgarian language?' All the Slavic scholars in Ukraine agree that the Macedonians are an individual Slavic people, but as far as the language is concerned, there are differences of opinion. Some believe that there is no specific Macedonian

⁷⁹⁶Kostadin Palesski, *op. cit.*, 224, according to: CPA, f. 3, op. 4, arh. ed. 446.

literary language, others think that the Macedonian language is an individual Slavonic language with its own characteristics distinguishing it from all other languages. There were attempts at the establishment of an individual Macedonian literary language, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century (for example, Grigor Prličev's *Autobiography*, the works of Kiril Pejčinovik and Joakim Krčovski), but as a result of the strengthening of nationalistic propaganda in Macedonia (Bulgarian, Serbian), the Macedonian intelligentsia started using Bulgarian and Serbian, and also the Greek literary language.

Further on Veličkov (himself insufficiently informed on the historical development of the Macedonian written language) wrote:

I do not know whether our party and the Comintern have a precisely and fully defined position on the language of the Macedonians; if there is such a position, if the BCP and the Comintern consider that the Macedonian language is an individual language, will you let us know immediately so that we can direct research work on the correct track. The study of the question of the language is of considerable political significance, especially now, bearing in mind the fascist theories on race and ethnicity, etc., and also the strengthening of nationalistic preaching by Bulgarian and Serbian bourgeois scholars.⁷⁹⁷

On June 25, 1935, Vladimir Poptomov (V. Gromov) replied to the External Bureau of the BCP in connection with Veličkov's letter and the enclosed note from Bogdanov:

The readiness that some distinguished Soviet Slavic scholars in Kiev have expressed to Comrade Veličkov for the start of special research into the character of the Macedonian language is of great significance and should be encouraged and used to the greatest possible extent.

Then the Macedonian Poptomov added:

The question of the character of the Macedonian people as an individual national and historical entity and also the question of the individual character of the Macedonian language are questions which have long been waiting for their scientific Marxist clarification and are of great current political and revolutionary significance to the people of the Balkans. The affirmative verification of that question represents the objective basis for the thesis of the Comintern and the communist parties of the people of the Balkans concerning the self-determination of the Macedonian people. That position of the Comintern found its concrete formulation at the Fifth Congress in Lausanne, supporting a united and independent Macedonia. And the Resolution on the Macedonian Question of the B[alkan] L[ender] S[ecretariat], of February 1934, points to the principal direction concerning the question of the Macedonian nation and language.

⁷⁹⁷D-r Rasti slav Terzi oski, „Ruski dokumenti za posebnost a na makedonski ot narod“, *Nova Makedoni ja*, ž, 16972, 22.šř .1994, 12 and 16973, 23.šř .1994, 8; Li na Ž i l a, „Komi nter nat a i pra š awet o na makedonski ot jazi k“, *Kul t uren ž i vot*, HHHáH, 6-7, 1994, 73.

After describing the oppression of the Macedonian people by “the ruling nations in the three imperial states among which Macedonia is divided”, Poptomov pointed out:

IMRO (United) should organize and direct the daily struggle against any manifestations of national oppression inside IMRO (United), waging a struggle against the dismemberment and subjugation of the Macedonian people and against all forms of cultural, social and economic oppression, and for the national liberation and unification of all the parts of Macedonia; it should expose the true meaning of all speculations aiming to deny the Macedonians their character of a nation [...] with regard to any exclusive law affecting the right of the Macedonian masses to the use of their mother tongue in all the institutions of the state and society, for the freedom to study in it and publish books.

Explaining the historical reasons why it had been impossible in the past “to form a literary language” of the Macedonian dialects, Poptomov concluded that “the lack of such a language cannot serve as a basis for denying in general the individual character of the Macedonian language spoken by millions of the masses of the Macedonian people”. Therefore he insisted on “the necessity of a prompt start on a scholarly elaboration of these questions,” because they were posed from within, by the Macedonians themselves. He continued:

How pressing these questions are can be seen from the vivid interest shown both in the party and in Macedonian and national-patriotic circles in Macedonia and among the émigré community. And the leadership circles of IMRO (United) have long persistently proposed this, trying to get Soviet scholars interested in the Macedonian question, and have even made concrete proposals to ask Professor Derzhavin to write a pamphlet on the question of the Macedonian nation. As far as the Petrič region is concerned, these questions are of even greater significance, because there is not only the Bulgarian bourgeoisie, but also its agents in the form of the Macedonian Vrhovists, who are conducting widespread propaganda about the purported Bulgarian national character of Macedonia. I believe that the elaboration of the Macedonian question should move along the following lines: (1) Elaboration of the question of the Macedonian nation; (2) Elaboration of the question of the Macedonian language, and (3) Critique of bourgeois theories on these questions.

Poptomov also made a practical proposal:

[F]or the organization of this work the most appropriate solution will be if the E[xternal] B[ureau] appoints a special brigade which will work under its control. The task of the brigade will be to gather not only the Soviet scholars in Kiev, Moscow, Leningrad and other places in the Soviet Union, where they deal with the Macedonian issues, [but also] to make it easier for them and help them in their work, to report on the results obtained and their use by the EB, etc. That brigade should consist of: Comrade Veličkov, who, it seems, can be useful in this area, Comrade Gachev (in Moscow) and two other academicians — historians and philosophers — if there are

such. Comrade Dino Kósev (Moscow), who has certain qualifications in these questions and can be useful, could also be co-opted in the group.

As far as Veličkov was concerned,

in reply to his letter, he should be notified of the position of the Comintern on the question of the Macedonian nation and language, so that the start of the work in Kiev would not be delayed.⁷⁹⁸

At that same period the young Soviet philologist, Samuil B. Bernstein, while searching through the Odessa State Archives, found the proof sheets of the first issue of Misirkov's *Vardar* (1905),⁷⁹⁹ and later wrote the first contribution on the Macedonian language in the first Soviet encyclopaedia.⁸⁰⁰

There are documents confirming that there were official proposals that the periodicals of IMRO (United) be printed in "a popular Macedonian dialect", instead of Bulgarian.⁸⁰¹ In the "secret" report of V. Gromov (Vladimir Poptomov) of September 11, 1935, entitled *Konkretnite v'prosi na nacional-revoljucionното dviženie na Balkanite sled VII kongres na Kominternata* (Concrete questions of the national-revolutionary movement in the Balkans after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern), the section dealing with Macedonia (in Yugoslavia) demanded "publication in Macedonia of a popular people's newspaper in the Macedonian language" and "the writing of a popular pamphlet about the Macedonian question and the tasks of IMRO (United) in the Macedonian language for widespread distribution in Macedonia". In the section dealing with Macedonia under Greece, Gromov defined the following task as the second: "Publication of a Macedonian newspaper and two popular pamphlets in the Macedonian language: the first should treat the past of the Macedonian national and revolutionary movement, and the second — the present situation in Macedonia and the tasks of IMRO (United)." In all probability, after the abolition of the External Bureau of the Central Committee of IMRO (United) in Paris and "after the reorganization of the publication of *Makedonsko Delo*", it was suggested that its editor, Vlahov, came "for a vacation and medical treatment in the USSR". It is significant that Gromov specified another very important idea which was unfortunately not put into practice: "Setting

⁷⁹⁸D-r Rastislav Terzi oski, *op. cit.*, 23. ár .1994, 8; Li na Ž i l a, *op. cit.*, 74-75. There are considerable differences in the translations of both documents by these two authors.

⁷⁹⁹S. B. Bernštejn, „I z i s t o r i i m a k e d o n s k o t o l i t e r a t u r n o g o ð z i k a „ V a r d a r “ K . P . M i s i r k o v a “, *Slavjanskaja filologija. Sbornik statij, v'pusk tretijà. Pod redakcijè prof. S. B. Bernštejna*, Moskva, 1960, 70-71.

⁸⁰⁰*Вольная советская энциклопедия*, t. 37, Moskva, 1938, 743-744; Cvetan Stanoevski, „Makedonija voruski tei sovetски te enciklopedii“, *Razgladi*, Hf ááá, 4, Skopje, 1967, 473.

⁸⁰¹Kostadin Palješ utski, *op. cit.*, 224; CPA, f. 10, op. 1, arh. ed. 75.

up regular links with Salonika, where it is presumed that the Unifying political centre of IMRO (United) should be and where the newspaper *Makedonsko Delo* should be published. It is necessary to coordinate this with our Greek comrades at this very moment.” So *Makedonsko Delo* was to become a “central newspaper”, printed in Salonika and distributed also to the Macedonians in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia.

The Resolution of the Comintern on the Macedonian question immediately reinvigorated the Macedonian press in the Balkans and in émigré circles across the ocean. No legal periodicals in the Macedonian language were allowed to be published, but exceptionally important mouthpieces appeared using the official languages of the countries where the Macedonians or Macedonian émigrés lived. Some of them printed texts in Macedonian as well.

In a period of only two years, until the ‘abolition’ of the External Bureau of the Central Committee of IMRO (United), a large number of legal and illegal newspapers and journals were published in Bulgaria. In addition to *Makedonsko Zname* and *Makedonska Mladež*, whose last issues appeared on July 1 and May 6, 1934, respectively, when all progressive periodicals were banned in Bulgaria, in the years 1935-1936 the two most important Macedonian publications, *Makedonski Vesti* (January 24, 1935 – October 16, 1936)⁸⁰² and, for a brief period, *Makedonska Zemja* (January 23 – March 18, 1936) were legally printed. Besides them, the following illegal publications also appeared: *Obedinist* (February 1 – July 1935), *Nožot* (? – May 5, 1935), *Makedonska Revoljucija* (May–June 1935), *Hristo Trajkov* (January 1936), *Bjuletin na V'treumatata Makedonska Revoljucionna Organizacija (Obedinena)* (July 1936) and *Makedonsko Edinstvo* (October 1936).⁸⁰³ The people from the Pirin part of Macedonia and the émigrés in Bulgaria accepted the programme of IMRO (United) as representing their own ideals, and this organization started playing the role of a sole Macedonian communist party over the entire ethnic territory of the divided land.

Yet, taking into account the interests and integrity of the states that controlled Macedonia and due to the fact that IMRO (United) envisaged first Macedonia’s unification and only later its incorporation as a whole within a possible Balkan federation, on the insistence of the parties coming from these states and as part of the concept of a united anti-fascist front, following the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in Moscow a decision was passed on the silent ‘abolition’ of IMRO

⁸⁰²D-r Bl až e Ri stovski , *Projavi i prof ili ...*, á, 230-246; D-r Bl až e Ri stovski , *Port ret i i procesi ...*, ááá, 401-458.

⁸⁰³D-r Bl až e Ri stovski , *Makedonski ot narod i makedonskat anaci ja...*, áá, 502-510; D-r Bl až e Ri stovski , „Naci onal ni ot i zr az vo i legal ni ot pečat na VMRO(Ob)“, *Razgl edi* , HHHř á, 9-10, 1993, 695-724.

(United) and the incorporation of its members within the parties of the corresponding countries.

The political decision on the ‘abolition’ of IMRO (United) itself remains still insufficiently studied. It can be inferred from the general platform concerning “the popular front” and the protection of the countries between which Macedonia was partitioned. The first to raise the question of the abolition of IMRO (United) was the Communist Party of Yugoslavia at its Plenum in Split, in June 1935, even before the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, even though different views were expressed during the discussion.⁸⁰⁴

It is important, however, that the Comintern itself maintained a much more careful approach concerning the question of the Macedonian national liberation struggle. Shortly after the Seventh Congress, there was a special meeting of the Balkan section of the Comintern in Moscow, where the activity of IMRO (United) was analysed. At that time this organization had stepped up even more its activity in the Aegean and, in particular, the Pirin part of Macedonia as well as among the émigrés in Europe and overseas countries. This was indeed the most fruitful period bringing the strongest affirmation of the Macedonian nation in the period between the two world wars. This activity was also developed among the Macedonians in Yugoslavia, but only through the *Vardar* Cultural and Educational Society in Zagreb (later in Belgrade and Skopje), and also in particular through MANAPO (the Macedonian National Movement), but with a concept of struggle extending no further than the borders of Yugoslavia, without the vision of a single Macedonian national liberation front in all the parts of the dismembered land, and without even mentioning the prospects of unification.

Even though in the autumn of 1936 IMRO (United) was severely persecuted in Bulgaria and almost ceased its public activity, we should bear in mind that it was as late as March 20, 1937, that the **Executive Committee of the Comintern** worked out “a new *Project-directive for the tasks of the Macedonian movement*”. It was clear that the Executive Committee of the Comintern assessed that IMRO (United) was still carrying out certain activities among the Macedonians in Bulgaria and Greece, but it also explained that this organization had already been “rendered obsolete”: “The experience of the past years,” says this Project-directive, “has shown that the existence of a single Macedonian national-revolutionary organizations for the three parts of Macedonia is not expedient”, because “the concrete national demands and organizational forms of struggle of the Macedonian masses in the three parts of Macedonia are beginning to become increasingly diverse”. Therefore,

⁸⁰⁴Kostadin Paletski, *op. cit.*, 236-238.

A single and independent Macedonia is the political ideal of the entire Macedonian people, towards which it has always aspired and which derives from its right to national self-determination, including secession. But to speak and write today, in the present internal and international situation, of an 'independent Macedonia' as a pressing task of the Macedonian national liberation movement is not expedient. It alienates not a small number of democratic and progressive forces in the Balkan and non-Balkan countries from the Macedonian national liberation movement, which could otherwise be sympathetic, or even act as allies, to the Macedonian masses in the struggle for the enlargement of their rights and freedoms along the road of democratization of states.

The directive applied to all the parts of Macedonia and was addressed to the three communist parties, demanding from the Communist Party of Yugoslavia that it fight "for the elementary national-cultural, educational and linguistic rights and freedoms, for national equality", but that at that stage "the slogan of political autonomy for Macedonia within the framework of the federal democratic state can be used only for the purpose of propaganda"; yet the CPY should "refrain from open interference in the Macedonian movement, from giving orders or imposing political or tactical platforms incompatible with the broad national character of this movement".⁸⁰⁵

It was obvious that the Balkan communist parties had succeeded in persuading the Comintern that it should avoid the "parallelism" in order to strengthen "the popular front" of these countries. IMRO (United) had to disappear formally from the Macedonian political scene. It endangered the integrity of these Balkan states. As a result, the Comintern frequently oscillated in its practical policy on this question. For example, the secretary-general of the Comintern, Georgi Dimitrov, first ordered Dimitar Vlahov not to print the already typeset material for the last issue (200) of *Makedonsko Delo*, the mouthpiece of IMRO (United),⁸⁰⁶ but later, immediately after the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, a **Project-directive on the work of the communist parties in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece concerning the Macedonian national-revolutionary movement** was issued, in which IMRO (United) was strongly supported and the appropriate communist parties were obliged to offer it assistance "in the building of a general Macedonian national revolutionary front, for the struggle against national oppression and for the self-determination of Macedonia", recommending even the establishment of a political and organizational centre inside the land and, what was particularly significant, the publication of a central newspaper "in the Macedonian language".⁸⁰⁷

⁸⁰⁵According to Kostadin Palesski, *op. cit.*, 252-254.

⁸⁰⁶Dimitar Vlahov, *Memoari*. Predgovor i redakcija Vanga i Kole Čašule, Skopje, 1970, 364 and 366.

Altogether, it seemed that the Comintern “oriented itself towards a painless, slow and unforced dissolution of IMRO (United) in all three parts of Macedonia, depriving it of its functions in the class movement”.⁸⁰⁸

The Macedonians in Bulgaria long opposed this abolition and continued to print their mouthpieces, but towards the end of 1936, when left without adequate support and after the great legal proceedings of its members and leaders, their organization had to cease its activity.

This, however, did not mean discontinuation of the struggle of the Macedonians for the achievement of their final objectives. If it was impossible for the half-underground **Macedonian Literary Circle** (MLK), set up as part of the editorial board of *Makedonski Vesti* (1936),⁸⁰⁹ to work, two years later it continued its activity as an underground **Macedonian Literary Circle**,⁸¹⁰ under the leadership of Nikola Jonkov Vapcarov (1938-1941). Numerous Macedonian literary works were produced under its aegis — in both Macedonian and Bulgarian — and some of its members were later to become the founders of the Writers’ Association of Macedonia (active up to the present day) as well as founders of other scholarly and cultural institutions and associations in the liberated part of Macedonia.

It must be emphasized that the Macedonians in Bulgaria in this period made attempts at publishing a printed mouthpiece on a regular basis. They first tried to reorganize the newspaper *Globus* (1934-1937), but it was banned; the newspaper *Goce* (1938) was ready for print, but it, too, was not allowed to leave the printing shop. In 1939 there finally appeared the first (and only) number of the miscellany entitled *Ilinden 1903*: it, too, could not continue its existence.⁸¹¹ At that time progressive Macedonians abundantly used the pages of the Bulgarian progressive press, even taking over some of the periodicals (such as *Literaturen Kritik*).

Of special significance was the publication of individual items. Some ten collections of poetry by members of the Macedonian Literary Circle appeared, and also important studies and national-political tracts were printed, such as *Makedonskitë slavjani* (The Macedonian Slavs) by Angel Dinev (1938) and *Makedonskijat v’pros i balkanskoto edinstvo* (The Macedonian Question and Balkan Unity) by Kosta Lambrev (1938). Of particular importance were the publications *Nacionalno-porobeni narodi i nacionalni malcinstva* (Nationally-

⁸⁰⁷According to Kostadin Palčevski, *op. cit.*, 246-248.

⁸⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 248.

⁸⁰⁹D-r Bláževski, „Neprekidni kontinuitet meѓu HÁH i HH vek“, *Nova Makedonija*, HŽ, 13469, 21. ř. ř. 1984, 6; D-r Bláževski, *Makedonski letopi s. Raskopki nalit erat urni i nacionalni temi*, ř. ř. Skopje, 1993, 23-46.

⁸¹⁰D-r Bláževski, *Projavi i profili...*, ř. ř. 246-258 and 273-317; D-r Bláževski, *Makedonski ot narod i makedonskat a naci ja...*, ř. ř. 561-634.

⁸¹¹For these events, see: *Ibid.*, 504-505.

Subjugated Peoples and National Minorities, 1938), *V'zraždaneto na Makedonija i Ilindenskoto v'zstanie* (The Rebirth of Macedonia and the Ilinden Uprising, 1939) and *Borci za nacionalna svoboda* (Fighters for National Freedom, 1940) by Kosta Veselinov [as part of the *K'lbó* ('Circle') National Scientific Library], which served as genuine textbooks for the national education of the younger Macedonian generation, and it was no chance that immediately after the Liberation (1944) some of these pamphlets became the first textbooks of national history in the newly-established Macedonian schools.

And while after the establishment of Metaxas's military-fascist dictatorship in Greece the Macedonians were unable to boast of any public accomplishments in this area, in the Vardar part of Macedonia it was in the years 1936-1941 that the major achievements were made in the affirmation of the Macedonian national literature and culture and of the Macedonian language as a literary standard. **The Vardar Macedonian Society** in Zagreb printed the first issue of *Nauvesnik* (March 31, 1937),⁸¹² which, among other things, printed poetry in the mother tongue, but it was banned from the very outset. Shortly thereafter, the journal *Luč* (1937-1938)⁸¹³ began to be printed in Skopje, publishing a large number of poems in Macedonian, the play *Pečalbari* (Migrant Workers) by Anton Panov and other materials of major significance to Macedonian literary and cultural history. When this periodical, too, was suppressed, in Maribor there appeared the first and only number of the newspaper *Južna Stvarnost* (1939).⁸¹⁴ The unofficial mouthpiece of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party in Macedonia, *Naua Reč* (1939-1941), started appearing somewhat earlier.⁸¹⁵ Despite its being frequently banned and persecuted, this periodical played an important role in the preparation of Macedonian young people from this part of Macedonia for the approaching fateful events.

In addition to these legal publications, this was the period which saw the publication of the first underground periodicals in the Macedonian language: *Bilten*, mouthpiece of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party in Macedonia (July 20 – October 30, 1940)⁸¹⁶ and *Iskra*, mouthpiece of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party in Macedonia (January 1941).⁸¹⁷ Following Misirkov's *Vardar* (1905) and the Veles newspaper *Iskra* (1922),⁸¹⁸ these peri-

⁸¹²D-r Bl až e Ri stovski , *Projavi i prof ili ...*, á, 264-266 and áá 168-170.

⁸¹³*Ibid.*, I, 70-77 and 266-271.

⁸¹⁴I van Kat ar xi ev, *Borba do pobeda, ář . St udi i i st at i i*, 537-559.

⁸¹⁵D-r Bl až e Ri stovski , *Projavi i prof ili ...*, á, 273-272; D. Al eksi k, „*Naua reč*“ 1939-1941. *Od i st ori jat a na napredni ot peč at vo Makedoni ja*, Kul tur a, Skopje, 1960.

⁸¹⁶*I legal ni ot peč at na KP J vo Vardarska Makedoni ja...*, 101-194.

⁸¹⁷*Ibid.*, 197-222.

⁸¹⁸D-r Bl až e Ri stovski , *Kočo Rac i n...*, 47-48.

odicals continued the tendency towards the establishment of a **Macedonian press in the Macedonian language**. Their significance was even greater as they managed to maintain that tradition in the period of the National Liberation War and maintain the continuity of ideology and practice in the building of the modern printed word.

This was also a time when the Macedonian language in the Vardar section of Macedonia was in widespread literary use. This tendency was best reflected in drama (Vasil Iljoski, Anton Panov, Risto Krle, Radoslav Petkovski, etc.), and the Skopje State Theatre staged several plays in the native tongue.⁸¹⁹ Poetry was also an important medium: a pleiad of mostly young writers started publishing poems in progressive Yugoslav periodicals,⁸²⁰ and the first collections of poetry appeared: *Idi prolet* (The Spring is Coming) by Volče Naumčeski (1939)⁸²¹ and *Beli mugri* (White Dawns) by Kočo Racin (1939).⁸²² This was a period when the Macedonian literary word established itself with its artistic achievements, experiencing a great affirmation and merging into the currents of the National Liberation War, when the first books in the history of free Macedonian literature were printed.

The Macedonian émigré community always played an important part in the liberation struggle of the Macedonian people. In the 1930s, Macedonian émigrés in North and South America played a particularly significant role. Such a journalistic activity developed there that it occupies a special place in the history of the Macedonian press.⁸²³ Of all émigré publications, the journal *Makedonsko Delo* (1925-1935), the official mouthpiece of IMRO (United) printed in Europe, had the greatest significance and impact. Of the periodicals published across the Ocean, we should mention *Makedonski Bjuletin* (1930-1931), the first mouthpiece of the Macedonian progressive movement in America. After the founding congress of the **Macedonian People's League of America**, the monthly *Balkansko Sdruženie* (1931-1934) started its publication. Precisely at the moment when the newspaper *Makedonsko Zname* was banned in Sofia, after the crucial fourth congress of the Macedonian People's League in Chicago, starting from July 1, 1934, there appeared probably the most important mouthpiece of Macedonian émigrés in Amer-

⁸¹⁹Al eksandar Aleksi ev, *Osnovopol ož ni ci na makedonskat a dramskat a lit erat ura*, áá dopol net o i zdani e, Kul t ura, Skopje, 1976.

⁸²⁰D-r Bl až e Ri st ovski, *Makedonski ot st ih 1900-1944. I st raž uvawa i mat eri jal i*, á-áá, Mi sl a, Skopje, 1980.

⁸²¹Vol če Naumčeski, *St ihovi (1939-1941)*. Redakci ja, predgovor i zabel eš ki d-r Bl až e Ri st ovski, St udent ski zbor, Skopje, 1979.

⁸²²Kočo Raci n, *Bel i mugri*. P redgovor, i zbor, bel eš ki i redakci ja Al eksandar Spasov, Mi sl a, Skopje, 1981.

⁸²³For more details concerning this activity see: D-r Bl až e Ri st ovski, *Makedonski ot narod i makedonskat a naci ja...*, áá, 511-522.

ica, *Trudova Makedonija* (1934-1938), which, in addition to *Makedonsko Delo*, was the only Macedonian periodical at that time which openly and freely propagated the Macedonian nation and national culture, including the Macedonian language. It continued to appear even after IMRO (United) was ‘abolished’ and its mouthpieces banned, and became the sole banner under which Macedonians from all parts of the divided fatherland gathered, where activists from the Balkans cooperated and where the most important documents of the Macedonian progressive movement of the period were published, including the article ‘Why We Macedonians are a Separate Nation’, under the pseudonym **Bistriški** (Vasil Ivanovski).⁸²⁴ *Trudova Makedonija* became a transmitter of the authentic ideology of the Macedonian people for a free and united Macedonian republic. Yet at that time the platform of *Trudova Makedonija* was not acceptable to the Comintern, and at the conference of the Bulgarian-Macedonian Workers’ Educational Clubs in the USA, in Detroit, on January 30, 1938, the Macedonian newspaper *Trudova Makedonija* and the Bulgarian *S’znanie* were united into a single and joint “newspaper of the Bulgarians and Macedonians in America” under the new name *Narodna Volja* (February 11, 1938 – 1978). This mouthpiece continued to unite journalists and associates from all three parts of Macedonia and to cultivate the ideology of the previous newspaper. It continued to publish highly important documents of the Macedonian liberation movement which could not be printed in the Balkans, making it possible for them to reach the international public.⁸²⁵ The impact of these periodicals was even greater considering the fact that some articles were published in both English and Macedonian.

There were also other Macedonian periodicals published by the Macedonian émigré community, such as *Proletersko Delo* (Toronto, 1934-1935), *Edinstvo* (Toronto, 1936-1940) and *Narodna Tribuna* (Buenos Aires, 1936-1939), but the most important seems to have been “the mouthpiece of the Macedonian progressive group in Buenos Aires, Argentina”, *Makedonski Glas* (1935-1939), which in South America was what *Trudova Makedonija* was in the northern part of the continent.

Besides these periodicals, we should also mention the **annual collections** published **after each congress of the Macedonian People’s League**, bringing articles of major historical significance for the affirmation of Macedonian national and cultural thinking and action. We should also point out that the Macedonian People’s League issued other publications, some of them in English.

⁸²⁴*Trudova Makedonija*, á, 6, Detroit, Dekem 1934, 4-5.

⁸²⁵Bl aže Ri stovski, „I l i n den vo pečat ot na makedonskata emigracija“, in: *Prilozi za I l i n den*, ř, Bi tola–Krušo, 1983, 230-235.

In conclusion, we can say that the Macedonian national development was able to maintain a line of full continuity. In their authentic struggle for national affirmation the Macedonians found individuals and organizations that offered them precious support, but the Resolution of the Comintern in early 1934 was undoubtedly the most important act contributing to the international affirmation of the Macedonian national identity. It gave the Macedonian national liberation movement a new dimension, which led to the full establishment of Macedonian as a literary standard, of Macedonian literature in the native tongue and of the Macedonian nation and culture in all its aspects. The Resolution was a document that sanctioned the reality of the Macedonian national consciousness and helped its affirmation in an effective way. From this point to the Second Ilinden there was no other road for the Macedonians. The task was to be completed, although with some compromises, at the First Session of the Anti-Fascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia on August 2, 1944.

The National Liberation Programmes of the Macedonian Movement in Progressive Émigré Circles (1934-1941)

Our research into Macedonian progressive émigré circles has shown that there are no relevant grounds for assuming that there was a **single Macedonian progressive movement** in the form of an association, organization or institution. It was actually a conglomerate of social, political, cultural and national activities in all the environments of the heterogeneous Macedonian émigré community throughout the world in the 1930s. When speaking of the programme principles of the **Macedonian progressive movement** in emigration, we refer, above all, to the Macedonians in Bulgaria,⁸²⁶ and also to those in Europe and across the Ocean — in the United States, Canada, Argentina and Uruguay.⁸²⁷ Specific centres were set up there acting as organizational cores which, through their programmatic action, exerted influence outside their geographical environments as well. Here we must not forget the **Macedonian fighters in the international brigades in Spain**, which, as a distinct organized national group consisting of people from all the parts of Macedonia, appeared as a single national entity before the international and Macedonian public.⁸²⁸ We must also bear in mind that, in one or another way, all these progressive émigré circles were rather close to the ideology and programmes of workers' or communist movements, which operated largely under the direct or

⁸²⁶As there was a large number of active and revolutionary Macedonian émigrés living in Bulgaria after the Congress of Berlin up to the Balkan Wars, they always felt themselves and insisted on being treated as *émigrés* ('émigré community'). This situation continued even after 1918, when a section of Macedonia came within the frontiers of this monarchy, and even today we refer to the Macedonians who lived in the period between the world wars, for instance, in Sofia, as *Macedonian émigrés*, and yet we do not use the same term for those living, for example, in Belgrade, even though their position was identical.

⁸²⁷D-r Bl a ž e Ri stovski , *Makedonski ot narod i makedonska nacija. Prilozi za razvit okot na makedonska kulturno-nacionalna misla*, áá, Skopje, 511-522; D-r Bl a ž e Ri stovski , *Portreti i procesi ...*, ááá, 502-532; Mile Mihajlovi Mihajlo Georгиеvski , „Politika i vnost na Makedonski ot narden sojuz vo SAD i Kanada od 1928 do 1935 godina“, *Glasnik*, Hř , 1, Skopje, 1971, 105-136.

⁸²⁸D-r Bl a ž e Ri stovski , *Kočo Racin. Istoriško-literarni i stvaruvawa. Prilozi za razvit okot na makedonska kulturno-nacionalna misla*, Skopje, 1983, 304-348; Orde Ivanovski , „Vesnikot 'Trudova Makedonija' za Španska i graganska vojna (1936-1939)“, *Nova Makedonija*, 15-19. ř .1987.

indirect control of the Comintern. And the Macedonian people saw very early on that the sole hope for their liberation and unification was in that orientation, even though from a historical point of view, the **national** rather than the **class** question was of foremost significance to them.

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Due to the inaccessibility of relevant archive sources (primarily in Sofia and Moscow), in the gathering of facts and information we have relied mainly on available printed materials and also on the contemporary Macedonian and other progressive press of the period in question, which reflected the ideology and national concepts of the Macedonian progressive movement accurately and in great detail. This means that we have used **approximately twenty Macedonian legal and underground periodical publications** which we have been able to consult in our country, in Sofia and in Moscow.⁸²⁹

A general characteristic of the Macedonian progressive émigré community in this period was the coordination of its political programme with the lines of development of the progressive movement in the world and particularly in the Balkans, guided from a single centre — the Comintern and the Balkan Communist Federation as its branch until the time of its modification. Hence it is small surprise that the same articles were re-printed in different Macedonian publications.⁸³⁰ Yet the practical aspects of the national programme of this movement among the Macedonian progressive émigré community bore certain differences depending on the environment and concrete historical circumstances. Typical examples of this are the various resolutions, declarations, announcements, conclusions and similar documents published in these periodicals, from which the general development of Macedonian progressive liberation thought and action can be followed.

An essential and common characteristic which must be emphasized is the fact that the Macedonian progressive émigré community was organized and acted as a single organism, **with no divisions or barriers depending on the place of origin of its individual members whatsoever**. It was a united Macedonian progressive émigré community and its goals and tasks stemmed from its powerful patriotism and ideology.

We take the year 1934 as crucial, as it marked a turning point in the evolution of the Macedonian national liberation movement. It was by no means dictated from

⁸²⁹D-r B I a ž e R i s t o v s k i , *Makedonski ot narod i makedonskat a naci ja...*, áá, 502-527. For some of these publications, only individual numbers, years or contributions were available to us.

⁸³⁰B I a ž e R i s t o v s k i , „I l i n d e n v o p e č a t o t n a m a k e d o n s k a t a e m i g r a c i j a“, in: *Prilozi za I l i n d e n*, ř , B i t o l a – K r u š e v o , 1983, 227.

outside, but was actually the result of internal developments and the degree of maturity of the Macedonian national question. Even though Macedonian national thought had developed uninterruptedly from as early as the 1840s,⁸³¹ and even though the Macedonian progressive press had written about this aspect much earlier,⁸³² underlining its basic principles in 1933,⁸³³ we must, however, bear in mind that it was in January 1934 that the Executive Committee of the Comintern sanctioned the official acknowledgement of the Macedonian national individuality. This encouraged the free development of Macedonian national thought and facilitated its actions, and defined the conditions for support to the communist parties in the countries controlling the respective parts of Macedonia. In some parts of the land in particular, IMRO (United) was welcomed and accepted by the masses of the people and by the Macedonian émigré community as a **Macedonian communist organization or party** (which had even earlier led to some intense discussions within the Communist Party of Yugoslavia).⁸³⁴ Macedonian communists seemed to show **greater enthusiasm in becoming members of IMRO (United) rather than of the communist parties of the countries in which they lived**. This caused the reaction of these communist parties and was largely responsible for the proclamation of the principle of preservation of the Versailles borders, which coincided with the emergence of aggressive fascism that posed a threat to the “first socialist state”.

In accordance with this principle, **the slogan of independent Macedonia was changed into the slogan of a Balkan Federation**. It seemed rather utopian, and in 1934 a new slogan was formulated for the struggle for cultural and national autonomy of the parts of Macedonia within the countries controlling it. This was aimed to contribute to the easier creation of conditions for cooperation and unity in the struggle of the Balkan workers’ and peasants’ movement, which would lead to the laying of foundations for the proclamation of people’s republics, and only later, following the victory of the proletariat in all the Balkan states, could one think of the unification of the parts of Macedonia into a single and individual republic within the future federation. It was then that the slogan of the **creation of a Piedmont** was raised — regardless of the country in which historical circumstances would lead to the creation of that “Piedmont autonomy” first. It was believed that the most favourable conditions for achieving this aim at that moment were to be found in the Pirin part of Macedonia, which still manifested some

⁸³¹D-r Bl a ž e Ri stovski , *Makedonski ot narod i makedonskat a naci ja...*, á, 1983, 163-280.

⁸³²D-r Bl a ž e Ri stovski , *op. cit.*, áá, 528-549.

⁸³³*Makedonsko zname*, áá, 17, Sof i ò, 14.Háá.1933, 2.

⁸³⁴*I z v o r i z a i s t o r i j a t a n a S K M . D o k u m e n t i i m a t e r i j a l i 1 9 2 1 - 1 9 4 1*, á, 2. Redakci ja, p r e v o d i k o m e n t a r i i v a n K a t a r x i e v , S k o p j e , 1 9 8 5 , 3 8 - 3 9 , 1 8 3 - 1 8 4 , 2 2 4 - 2 2 8 a n d 2 7 8 .

‘autonomist’ tendencies, and some form of **Macedonian patriotism** was being intensively built up there.

Yet when the Plenum of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in Split posed the question of the preservation of the Versailles borders,⁸³⁵ it was, naturally, accepted by the rest of the Balkan communist parties. At the Seventh Congress of the Comintern that line became imperative for the communist movement in general, which was now made part, through a directive, of the organized antifascist popular front. The Macedonian progressive émigré community was also included in that concept, and IMRO (United) was sacrificed, to the great relief of some Balkan communist parties,⁸³⁶ even though this party offered certain resistance and postponed its removal from the political scene.⁸³⁷

It is interesting, however, that even when IMRO (United) was removed, its ideology continued to exist, particularly within the **Macedonian People’s League of America (United States and Canada)**, within the **Macedonian progressive groups in South America** and on the **Spanish antifascist front**. Thus, even within the framework of the proclamation of the antifascist popular front, which was accepted by the Macedonian progressive movement, the traditional concept of the unity of the **Macedonian national front** was retained, embodying the slogan of a **united, general, Macedonian national liberation and antifascist front**.⁸³⁸ It is also interesting that all programme documents emphasized that **the Macedonian progressive émigré community by no means abandoned the idea of the unification of the land and the people as their final objective and programme task**, and that due to the historical circumstances alone they released that task from prompt operative action.⁸³⁹ They did the same at the moments when this movement

⁸³⁵ *Pregrled na i st ori jat a na Sojuzot na komuni st i t e na Jugosl avi ja*, Skopje, 1963, 232-233; Dr Ivan Jelić, *Komunistička partija Hrvatske 1937-1941*, Zagreb, 1972, 57; Vladi mi r Kart ov, „Tr et manot na makedonskot o naci onal no praš awe vo pol i ti čkat a pl at f or ma na KP J vo tekot na 1935-1936 godi na“, *I st ori ja*, HHá, 2, Skopje, 1985, 192-193.

⁸³⁶ Blaže Ristovski, “The 1934 Comintern resolution on the Macedonian nation and language in the development of Macedonian national culture”, *Review*, XXX (1), INH, Skopje, 1986, 112-114.

⁸³⁷ D-r Bl aže Ri stovski , *Makedonski ot narod i makedonskat a naci ja*, áá, 492-501; see also: Kostadi n Pal eš ut ski , *Ě gosl avskat a komuni st i česka part i ja i makedonski jat v ěpros 1919-1945*, S of i ò, 1985, 246-254.

⁸³⁸ K. Lambrevi , „Kakvo i ska makedonski òti narodi ot i progresi vnat a obē est venost Ā“, *Narodna vol ja*, á, 48, Det roi ti , 6.á.1939, 1 and 3; „Edno i zl ož eni e“, *Narodna vol ja*, á, 48, Det roi ti , 6.á.1939, 2; Vl . Mar či , „Do ger oi t ò na Makedoni ò“, *Narodna vol ja*, á, 50, 20.á.1939, 3; „Makedonski òti vi proši na evropeàskat a scena“, *Narodna vol ja*, á, 51, 27.á.1939, 3; „I li ndenci do ‚Nar odna vol ò‘“, *Narodna vol ja*, áá, 2, 17.áá.1939, 1.

⁸³⁹ This was particularly clearly formulated by the secretary of the Macedonian People’s League of America, Geo Pirinski („Novot o pol ož eni e na Bal kani t ò i real nat a post anovka na mal ci nst veni ò vi proši“, *Narodna vol ja*, áá, 10, 14.ář .1939, 1-2), at the moment when Hitler occupied Austria and invaded Czechoslovakia. “It is clear,” wrote Pirinski, “that a Joint Balkan Bloc against the incursion of Hitler can be strong only if oppressed peoples and minorities, such as the Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Slovenes, etc., actively join it. But these Balkan peoples and minorities

insisted on unification with the entire Macedonian émigré community in general, offering this option, for instance, to the **Macedonian political organizations** in the United States and Canada.⁸⁴⁰

Thanks to all these circumstances, when fascism led to the outbreak of the Second World War the Macedonian progressive émigré community, together with the progressive forces inside Macedonia, joined the united Balkan antifascist bloc.⁸⁴¹

will still hesitate to take part in such a Joint Balkan Bloc if they are not granted certain rights, if their position is not made easier. Therefore democratic forces in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Greece and Romania are raising as their chief internal slogan the struggle for *equal democratic rights of all peoples and minorities in Yugoslavia, Greece, Bulgaria and Romania*. This means that Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek democratic movements and forces will fight in their countries so that democratic rights and freedoms as regards language, schools, churches, press, organizations, etc. may be granted to the Macedonians, Croats, Montenegrins, Slovenes, etc. Yet this struggle for equal democratic rights of the Macedonians, Croats, Montenegrins, etc. will be the more successful the sooner the Macedonians, Croats, etc. themselves take a more active part in it." The author continued by writing imperatively: "Today the Macedonians and Croats should not raise as a main slogan the struggle for their final goal — full national independence or full autonomy — and put the achievement of these slogans as a condition for their participation in the democratic front of the Balkan countries or for their participation in the Joint Balkan Bloc against Hitler's campaign in the Balkans, because if they posed that question in such a manner at the present political moment, they would not only fail to help the early establishment of the Joint Balkan Bloc and democratic front of popular forces in the countries themselves, but on the contrary — with these slogans for their final goal they would encumber the struggle for a Joint Balkan Bloc and would aid the German imperialist incursion. The final goal of the Macedonian and Croatian national liberation movements — full national independence — will be achieved the sooner the Macedonians and Croats take active part now in the struggle for equal rights of all peoples and minorities in the Balkan countries and also in the building of the Joint Balkan Bloc against Hitler's incursion. Many Bulgarians, Serbs and Greeks, who are now ready and are fighting together with the Macedonians and Croats for equal rights, have still not reached the stage of helping and taking an active part in the struggle of the Croats and Macedonians for full autonomy and national independence. These Bulgarians, Greeks and Serbs will most quickly come to an understanding of the final goals of the national liberation movements of the oppressed peoples and minorities in their countries through the struggle for equal rights."

⁸⁴⁰„Š esti ò kongres na Sī ò za. Doklad na C.K. na M.N.S. po deànost a na obedi neni eto na makedonskat a emi gr aci ò“, Dokl adč i k – Geo P i r i nski . *Trudova Makedoni a*, ááá, 1, Det roi t , 15.ř áá.1936, 1-5; ááá, 2, 30.ř áá.1936, 4-5; ááá, 3, 15.ř ááá.1936, 4-5 and 7; ááá, 4, 30.ř ááá.1936, 4-5 and 7; D. Todor ov, „Edi nst vo!“ , *Trudova Makedoni a*, ř , 7, 15.H.1937; „Centr al ni ò Komi tet i na Makedonski ò Narodni Sī ò z i , S.A.ê . Dekl ar aci ò v i r hu tekuë ite s i bi ti ò i predst odë ite zadači pred i makedonci te v i Amer i ka“, *Nar odna vol a*, ááá, 4, 1.ááá.1940; „Centr al - ni ò Komi tet i na Makedonski ò Narodni Sī ò z i , S.A.ê . Rezol ô ci ò v i r hu bor bat a za edi nst vo na makedonci te v i Amer i ka“, *Nar odna vol a*, ááá, 5, 8.ááá.1940, 1; „Edi nst vo za svobodat a na Makedoni ò!“ , *Nar odna vol a*, ááá, 9, 1940, 2; „Da zaë i ti ni pr avot o na makedonski ò narod i da se bor i za svobodat a si !“ , *Nar odna vol a*, áá, 10, 14.ř .1940, 3; A.M., „Makedonskot o edi nst vo“ , *Nar odna vol a*, ááá, 24, 1940, 1; „Apel a na zagori čani za makedonskot o edi nst vo“ , *Nar odna vol a*, ááá, 7, 22.ááá.1940, 3; „Naci onal ni ò Komi tet i na Makedono-Amer i - kanski ò Narodni Sī ò z i predl aga na Centr al ni ò Komi tet i na Makedonski te Pol i - ti česki Organi zaci i obë a akci ò. Vi zaë it a na Makedoni ò“ , *Nar odna vol a*, ř , 6, 14.ááá. 1941, 2.

⁸⁴¹The president of the Macedonian People's League, Smile Vojdanov, signed an important document („Germanskoto naš est vie na Bal kani te ne nosi osvobož denie, a novo i oë e po-čer no robst vo i za Makedoni ò. Edno važ no kom ò ni ke na Makedono-Amer i kanski ò Narodni Sī ò z i do amer i kanski a pr esa“ , *Nar odna vol a*, ř , 11, 18.ř .1941, 1 and 3) that ended with the

For almost the entire duration of the war Macedonia acted as an individual factor, but not putting special emphasis on the element of unification until the victory of this bloc in the Balkans was achieved. It thus found itself in a situation to wage a joint struggle without a single national leadership, cut up into four insufficiently coordinated segments.⁸⁴² This is what largely frustrated or at least lessened the prospects of the struggle for the final equitable and fair solution to the 'Macedonian question' as a whole.

2.

In the course of this period the Macedonian progressive movement waged a purposeful struggle for the development and affirmation of Macedonian national thought and culture. Various legal forms of activity were established: societies, circles, committees, theatres, libraries, reading clubs, etc. Some existing associations of Macedonian émigrés headed by people outside the movement were also used. As a result, in various places in Bulgaria⁸⁴³ and America⁸⁴⁴ (as was indeed the case within Macedonia, too), **theatre groups** were established performing **plays in the Macedonian language**, which dealt with subjects from the life and struggle of the Macedonian people and which met with a widespread and favourable reception in the émigré circles. A new **Macedonian National Theatre** was founded in Sofia⁸⁴⁵ and the play *Makedonska krvava svadba* (Macedonian Blood Wedding) by Vojdan Černodrinski was again staged, the author having made considerable changes in the text.⁸⁴⁶

following words: "Since the Balkan Wars in 1912/13 the Macedonian people has suffered extreme injustice under the triple oppression of the reactionary and pro-fascist leaders in Athens, Sofia and Belgrade. The Macedonians, however, know that their future as a free people lies not in joining Hitler and Mussolini, who are devastating the Macedonian villages and towns, nor in the opposite camp which in 1919 agreed to the partition of Macedonia among the three Balkan states, but that it lies in the understanding and joint struggle of the Balkan peoples for a Democratic Federation of Free Balkan Peoples' Republics."

⁸⁴²D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonski otfolklornacionalna svest. Prilozi za razvitiokotnamakedonskatakulturno-nacionalnamisla*, á, Skopje, 1987, 381-392; see also the discussion in: *ASNOM vo sozdavawetona državatnamakedonskiot narod*, MANU, Skopje, 1987, 442-450; Kole Čašule, *Zapisi za nacijatailiteraturata*, Skopje, 1985, 164-185.

⁸⁴³*Makedonski vesti*, á, 2, Sofið, 2.á.1935, [9]; á, 3, 9.á.1935, 8; á, 9, 23.á.1935, 7; *Makedonskazema*, á, 1, Sofið, 23.á.1936, 8.

⁸⁴⁴*Trudova Makedonija*, á, 13, 15.á.1937, 1 (pisesata *Kovačite*); á, 14, 30.á.1937, 1 (dramata *Uporitiot*) and 3 (*Slavnapetorka*).

⁸⁴⁵*Makedonski vesti*, á, 65, 5.ř.á.1936, 3; á, 66, 12.ř.á.1936, 4.

⁸⁴⁶*Makedonski vesti*, á, 65, 4.á.1936, 12; Vojdan Černodrinski, *Sobrani dela. Priredil Aleksandar Aleksi ev*, á, Skopje, 1976, 262-264.

The activity of the **Macedonian Literary Circle in Sofia** (1936-1941) was of special significance for the historical development of the Macedonians.⁸⁴⁷ It was undoubtedly the most important cultural and national Macedonian association of Macedonians from all parts of Macedonia in the inter-war period. It was based on a broad concept and not only united literary authors, but also promoted Macedonian arts, criticism, science and political thought — supporting the aims of the national liberation struggle.

Here we must underline the fact that, in all these events and manifestations, the national aspect was treated with a highly-developed consciousness of the Macedonian individuality. It was no chance that *Makedonski Vesti* re-printed three times the **facsimile of the front page of the journal *Makedonski Golos (Makedonski Glas)***⁸⁴⁸ of Dimitrija Čupovski and of the Macedonian Scholarly and Literary Society in St Petersburg/Petrograd. The same reprint could be found in the pages of the congress collection of the **Macedonian People's League of America** in 1937.⁸⁴⁹ It was also not by chance that, in his pamphlet *Makedonskata prerodba i Ilindenskoto vostanie* (The Macedonian Revival and the Ilinden Uprising, 1939), the prominent Macedonian national activist Kosta Veselinov put Krste Misirkov in the foremost place among the Macedonian cultural and national activists of the past.⁸⁵⁰ Misirkov's book *Za makedonckite raboti* was copied and studied in the Macedonian Literary Circle, and sections of these copies were sent to Belgrade to be studied by the Macedonian students there,⁸⁵¹ while in 1940 the members of the Circle visited Misirkov's wife in Sofia, and **Kole Nedelkovski** wrote in a letter with programmatic overtones to Misirkov's son, Dr Sergej Misirkov, that the Macedonian Literary Circle wanted to present the biography and activity of his praiseworthy father to the Macedonian public.⁸⁵²

⁸⁴⁷Mi hai l S mat r akal ev, „Duš at a na Makedonski ò l i t e r a t u r e n k r i ž o k“, *P i r i n s k o d e l o*, ř , 30, G. Dž umò, 24.ř áá.1947, 4; Mi hai l S mat r akal ev in: *N i k o l a ä o n k o v V a p c a r o v. S p o m e n i , p i s m a , d o k u m e n t i*, BAN, Sof i ò, 1953, 159-171; Di mi t ar Mi t r e v, *M a k e d o n s k i o t l i t e r a t u r e n k r u ž o k*, Bi b l i o t e k a „S o v r e m e n o s t“, kn. 37, S k o p j e, 1977; B l a ž e R i s t o v s k i, „P r i l o g k o n m a k e d o n s k a t a l i t e r a t u r n a i s t o r i j a. M a k e d o n s k i o t j a z i k v o l i t e r a t u r n a u p o t r e b a i l i t e r a t u r a t a n a M a k e d o n c i t e p i š u v a n a n a t u ğ i j a z i c i (áá)“, *S o v r e m e n o s t*, Hã , 5, S k o p j e, 1964, 509-530; B l a ž e R i s t o v s k i, „P o g l e d k o n n a c i o n a l n a t a a k t i v n o s t n a N i k o l a V a p c a r o v i n a M a k e d o n s k i o t l i t e r a t u r e n k r u ž o k v o S o f i j a“, *S o v r e m e n o s t*, HHH, 1, 1980, 40-50; G a n e T o d o r o v s k i, „40 g o d i n i o d f o r m i r a w e t o n a M a k e d o n s k i o t l i t e r a t u r e n k r u ž o k v o S o f i j a (1938-1978). B l e s k a v o p o g l a v j e v o n a š a t a l i t e r a t u r n a i s t o r i j a“. *S t r e m e ž*, HHHááá, 1, P r i l e p, 1979, 83-95.

⁸⁴⁸*Makedonski vesti*, á, 26, 20.ř áá.1935, 5; á, 29, 7.ř ááá.1935, 9; áá, 59, 24.ř á.1936, 1.

⁸⁴⁹*Doklad na Cent ral ni ja komi t et na Makedonski ja naroden sòюз pred del egat it e na Sedmi ja godi uen kongres, v Geri, I ndi ana, na 5, 6 i 7 sept emvri, 1937 god.*, 32.

⁸⁵⁰Kosta Vesel i nov i, *Vòzra ž danet o na Makedoni ja i I l i n d e n s k o t o v è z s t a n i e*, Sof i ò, 1939, 32.

⁸⁵¹According to Mitko Zafirovski's words in Skopje, in 1961.

In the same spirit, as early as 1934, in his article on the Macedonian national individuality⁸⁵³ (as well as in his pamphlet published two years later),⁸⁵⁴ **Bistricki (Bistriški, Vasil Ivanovski)** put particular emphasis on the cornerstone achievements of the ‘Lozars’, Teodosija Skopski (Gologanov) and Petar Poparsov, together with the impressive Ilinden traditions which continually inspired the intellectual potential of our émigrés in this period. The activity was thus consciously directed towards the establishment of the indispensable **historical continuity of the Macedonian national and cultural development**, without which the success of the national liberation struggle was inconceivable.

Only if we look at the entire activity of the Macedonian progressive émigré community through this prism can we understand the tactful endeavours of its printed mouthpieces (*Makedonski Vesti, Makedonska Zemja, Goce, Ilinden 1903*, etc.) to publish as many texts as possible on Macedonian national history and, in particular, Macedonian revolutionary history, and thus to contribute with an active and concentrated effort to the building and animation of Macedonian historical consciousness. Hence the editor of *Makedonski Vesti*, **Angel Dinev**, in each issue of his periodical had regular columns presenting texts from the Macedonian past, and as early as 1936 he officially announced the publication of his distinguished monograph *Ilindenska epopeja* (The Ilinden Epic),⁸⁵⁵ even though its first volume was published only after the Second World War (1945),⁸⁵⁶ and its second volume could only be printed in 1949 in the free section of his fatherland.⁸⁵⁷ For these reasons, Dinev published parts of his book *Makedonskite Sloveni* (The Macedonian Slavs) as articles in 1935-1936, and it was printed separately as an organic whole only as late as 1938,⁸⁵⁸ playing a historic role in the affirmation of the

⁸⁵²D-r Ser gej Mi si r kov, „Mal i spomēni za Kol e Nedel kovski i Ni kol a Vap car ov“, *Report er*, á, 10, Skopje, 9.H.1955, 4; D-r Bl a ž e Ri st ovski, „Kol e Nedel kovski za del ot o na Mi si r kov. Test ament al ni por aki“, *LI K*, ř áá, 262, 16.áá.1994, 13.

⁸⁵³Bi str i š ki, „Za ě o ni e makedonci te sme ot del na naci ð?“, in: *Čet v ěrt i ja kongres na Makedonski ja naroden s ěюз v Ameri ka*, Det roi t, 1934, 42-55.

⁸⁵⁴Bi str i cki, *Makedonska t a naci ja*, Sof i ð, 1936. We have not had the opportunity of examining the pamphlet, but we know of it from the unsigned review by its editor, Dr N. Minkov (D-r N. Mi nkov, „Makedonska naci ð“, *Naci ja i pol i t i ka*, áá, 5, Sof i ð, ě ni –avgust 1936, 148-149).

⁸⁵⁵*Makedonski vest i*, áá, 73, 8.H.1936, 3.

⁸⁵⁶Angel Di nev, *I l i ndenska epopeja (Razvoj na maked. osvobodit el no dvi ž eni e)*, t om á, Sof i ð y.a. (but according to the writing of the author himself on the non-paginated page 440, it must have been published after October 11, 1945).

⁸⁵⁷Angel Di nev, *I l i ndenska epopeja*, del áá, Skopje, 1949.

⁸⁵⁸Angel ĩ Di nevĳ, „Makedonski t ě sl av ĳni“, *Makedonski vest i*, áá, 69, 3.áH.1936, 4; áá, 70, 10.áH.1936, 4; áá, 71, 17.áH.1936, 4; áá, 73, 8.H.1936, 2; áá, 74, 16.H.1936, 4. Due to the newspaper’s being banned, the text was not completed. It was published in its entirety as a separate booklet: Angel ĩ Di nevĳ, *Makedonski t ě sl av ĳni*, Sof i ð, 1938, 72.

Macedonian historical and national consciousness and in the organized activity of the Macedonian progressive émigré community for the liberation cause.⁸⁵⁹

All these and other actions and acts by the Macedonian progressive movement made it possible to define more clearly the national liberation concept of the Macedonian people and to incorporate this consciousness and will into the Second Ilinden (in spite of all the obstacles presented from outside), as reflected in the documents of the First Session of the Antifascist Assembly of the National Liberation of Macedonia (1944).

⁸⁵⁹Апи сї [Vasil Haxiki mov], *SÍ ě est vuva li makedonska naci я*, Sof i ò, 1939, s. 46; St. Boòdž i evi , *SÍ ě est vuva li makedonska naci я?*, Sof i ò, 1940, s. 39.

Macedonian Cultural and National Thought and Action in the Period between the Two World Wars

Immediately after the Treaty of Versailles, the Macedonian forces of all factions consolidated themselves and continued the struggle for liberation in the new circumstances. They soon began to differentiate themselves into two basic currents: the 'right' (headed by IMRO and the Executive Committee of the Macedonian Brotherhoods) and the 'left' (headed by adherents of progressive movements). Both fought for a united Macedonian state, but with different means and on different platforms: IMRO continued its revolutionary and terrorist activity, with a compromise national policy serving Bulgarian revanchist policy, while the Macedonian progressive movement saw its prospects in the unification of liberation forces around the 'leftist' programme platform which had Balkan connotations and enjoyed international support, and respected the centuries-old aspirations of the Macedonian people.

In late April and early May 1924 a serious attempt was made at unifying the shattered Macedonian liberation movement, and a **Declaration** was signed which stressed that the movement "fights for the liberation and unification of the dismembered parts of Macedonia into a fully individual (independent) political unit, within its natural ethnic and geographical borders".⁸⁶⁰ This was also confirmed in the **Minutes** of the meeting of representatives from the Central Committee of IMRO and the Central Committee of the Macedonian Émigré Federal Organization of April 30.⁸⁶¹ May 6, 1924 was the date when the "**Manifesto** to the Macedonian people, to the organized revolutionary population of Macedonia and to the Macedonian revolutionaries" was signed, a document which elaborated in the most comprehensive and accurate way the same programmatic orientation as "the first and the most decisive step in the creation of the indispensable favourable atmosphere for the convocation in the near future of a *unifying* congress of the entire Macedonian revolutionary movement, where, with the efforts of all sincere Macedonian revolutionaries, a *united Macedonian revolutionary front* will be created, which, in close cooperation with all progressive-revolutionary movements

⁸⁶⁰*I zmenni ci t e na makedonskot o del o*, P r a g a, 1926, 53.

⁸⁶¹*Ibid.*, 55-56.

in the Balkans and in Europe, will win freedom and independence for Macedonia, and which will impose the establishment of the Balkan federation and secure peace in the Balkans — in order to help the establishment of peace in the whole of Europe”.⁸⁶²

The federalist concepts on the solution of the ‘Macedonian question’ were deeply instilled in the consciousness of the Macedonians, as the unification of partitioned Macedonia could only be achieved within a federal or confederal framework. As a result, Dimitrija Čupovski once again appealed: “We defend the independence of Macedonia together with the idea of the establishment of a Balkan People’s Federal Republic as an indispensable condition.”⁸⁶³

In those years Krste Misirkov came to the same conclusion, even though it concerned only the partial settlement of the ‘Macedonian question’ in the separate parts of Macedonia. Seeing the unprecedented terror of the Serbian authorities over the Macedonian population in Yugoslavia, he proclaimed: “Not simply putting one’s signature in the name of unity, but a federation of regions and nationalities in the name of freedom and equality can save Yugoslavia from inevitable disaster.”⁸⁶⁴ Misirkov was above all interested in the human and national rights of the Macedonians and sought means for the establishment of peace in the Balkans. Aware that “the road to mediaeval rivalries between the Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbs for domination and hegemony in the Balkans leads only through Macedonia,” Misirkov warned: “Only through the unification of all Macedonians in the three Macedonias and of all the émigrés in the four neighbouring Balkan capitals and in America, with a joint programme for making Macedonia a Switzerland in the Balkans, where every municipality will have a right to national and religious self-determination, will a stop be put to Balkan and general European rivalry for hegemony in the Balkans. It is only in an independent Macedonia that the guarantee lies for the pacification of the Near East, and through it, of the whole of Europe.”⁸⁶⁵

As the Balkan Communist Federation was set up and became active in the meantime — envisaging, among other things, a united republic of Macedonia in the planned federal state — the Macedonians saw their future in the communist movement, which was the only movement to promise liberation together with national self-determination and unification. It was on these premises that, in October 1925, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (United) was

⁸⁶²La *Fédération Balkanique*, á, 1, 15.ř áá.1924, 16.

⁸⁶³D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Dimitrija Čupovski (1878-1940) i Makedonskot o naučno-lit erati urno drugarstvo vo Pet rograd*, áá, Skopje, 1978, 329.

⁸⁶⁴K. Misirkovi, „Srbitō i ilindenskata 20-godišnica“, *I lindens*, ááá, 23, Sofið, 26.ř áá.1923, 2.

⁸⁶⁵K. Misirkovi, „I zhoditī“, *Pirin*, á, 8, Sofið, 2.Háá.1923, 1.

established, which immediately started publishing its mouthpiece, *Makedonsko Delo*. It was a national organization that united “all the revolutionary Macedonian forces of different orientations and nuances on the basis of the principles and ideas contained in the essentials of the Manifesto of May 6, 1924”.⁸⁶⁶ Article 1 of the Constitution of IMRO (United) said that the Organization “has the task of achieving the freedom and independence of Macedonia within its geographical and economic borders, and making an autonomous political unit of it, which, as an equal member, will be a constituent part of the future Balkan federation”.⁸⁶⁷ For more than a decade IMRO (United) was the pillar around which Macedonian liberation action was organized over the whole ethnic territory of Macedonia, through the activity of special regional committees.

The activity of the Macedonian student groups in the various centres of the Balkans and in Europe was of particular significance in this period. The most important among these were the **Goce Delčev Macedonian Popular Student Group** in Sofia (1930-1934),⁸⁶⁸ which published as its mouthpieces *Makedonski Studentski List*, *Makedonska Studentska Tribuna* and *Makedonska Mladež*, and actively participated in writing articles for the unifying mouthpieces *Makedonsko Zname* (1932-1934), *Makedonski Vesti* (1935-1936), *Makedonska Zemja* (1936), etc., and the **Vardar Cultural-Educational Society** in Zagreb (1935-1938),⁸⁶⁹ which later developed its own important branches in Belgrade and Skopje, and whose printed mouthpiece became *Naučesnik* (1937), banned after its first issue. The activity of the **Literary Group** in Skopje (1931-1933), which gathered mostly progressive writers, was similar. Shortly thereafter this group gave birth to the revolutionary-conspiratorial **Macedonian Youth Revolutionary Organization** (known under its acronym, MORO, 1933-1934),⁸⁷⁰ which swiftly spread its activity over almost the entire territory of the Vardar section of Macedonia and based its operation on the platform of the May Manifesto, but only within the frontiers of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In addition to the writing of literature in the native Macedonian tongue, MORO’s young revolutionaries made efforts to get

⁸⁶⁶*Makedonsko delo*, á, 15, 10.šř .1926, 5.

⁸⁶⁷*VMRO (Obedinet a) Dokumenti i materijali*, á I zbor, redakcija i komentar Ivan Kataršev, Skopje, 1991, 89.

⁸⁶⁸*Student skozname*, áá, 4, Sofiò, 20.Háá.1930; *Makedonski student skolist*, á, 1, Sofiò, 4.Háá.1931, 1-2; á, 2, 19.Háá.1931, 3-4; *Makedonska student skatribuna*, áá, 1, Sofiò, 20.H.1932, 1; *Makedonsko zname*, áá, 20, Sofiò, 9.šř .1934, 4; *Makedonsko delo*, šř áá, 185, April 1934, 8; D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Portreti i procesi od makedonska literaturna i nacionalna istorija*, áá, Skopje, 1990, 293-318.

⁸⁶⁹D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Projavi i profili od makedonska literaturna istorija*, áá, Skopje, 1982, 161-191.

⁸⁷⁰D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Kočo Racin. Istorisko-literaturni istražuvawa*, Skopje, 1983, 128-176.

to know themselves better, and studied Macedonian history and culture, gathered works of Macedonian folklore and tried to define the Macedonian alphabet, proposing their own designs for some of the graphemes representing unique Macedonian sounds. It was here that we find some of the subsequently distinguished writers and national activists such as Venko Markovski, Kole Nedelkovski and Kočo Racin. Their work was suppressed following the assassination of King Alexander, and a large number of MORO's more prominent members were arrested, but soon afterwards some of them became active again within the Sofia Macedonian Literary Circle and took part in the National Liberation War during the Second World War.

Of special significance for this progressive movement in the Vardar part of Macedonia was the manifold activity of the self-educated Kočo Racin. He joined the communist ranks as early as 1924, became a prominent member after 1928, and developed his most significant activity following his arrival in Skopje and the organization of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party in Macedonia (1931-1933), when he started printing its official mouthpiece, *Iskra*, and publishing the pamphlets *The USSR and Macedonia; Macedonia is neither Serbian nor Bulgarian or Greek*, etc.⁸⁷¹ It was Racin's detention and sentence that resulted in a temporary delay in the rapid growth of the national liberation movement.

The most significant question for the Macedonians until the Second World War was the building of the Macedonian national and historical consciousness and the affirmation of the Macedonian literary language. In the 1930s the young intelligentsia was very active in trying to become better acquainted with its own past, which was considerably muddled by the brutal greater-Serbian regime. Contacts with the young progressive circles of Macedonian émigrés in Sofia and the transfer of publications and ideas into the Vardar section of the land proved very useful. This became a particularly frequent practice after the May visit of Macedonian students from Belgrade University to Sofia (1939) and the historic meeting with the members of the Macedonian Literary Circle.

The 1930s in the Vardar part of Macedonia were characterized by significant creative activity in the Macedonian language, above all, in the fields of drama and poetry. In addition to the plays of Vasil Iljoski, Anton Panov and Risto Krle, which were publicly performed on the stage in Skopje, a number of dramatic pieces by Macedonian authors remained in the form of manuscript, testifying to a widespread process which was directly transferred to the liberation front.⁸⁷² There was

⁸⁷¹*Ibid.*, 93-116.

⁸⁷²Al eksandar Aleksi ev, *Osnovopoložni cit e na makedonskat a dramska lit erat ura*, Skopje, 1972; Al eksandar Aleksi ev, *Makedonskat a drama mežu dvet e svet ski vojni (I zbor)*, á-áá, Skopje, 1976; Mi odr ag Dr ugovac, *I st ori ja na makedonskat a kni ž evnost HH vek*, Skopje, 1990, 117-132, 148-156 and 159-171.

an even greater number of people who wrote poetry in their native tongue and published it in periodicals throughout Yugoslavia, and particularly in Macedonia. Of considerable importance for the affirmation of the Macedonian poetic word were the Skopje journal *Luč* (1937-1938) and the newspaper *Nauka Reč* (1939-1941), where the following young authors published works of poetry: Kočo Racin, Anton Panov, Ceko Stefanov Popivanov, Radoslav Petkovski, Voislav Ilić, Blagoj Stefkovski, Asen Todorov, Hristo Popsimov, Mite Bogoevski, Kire Dimov, Branko Zarevski, Kuzman Josifovski, Risto Lazoski, etc.⁸⁷³ A special place in the history of modern Macedonian literature must be assigned to the collections of poetry *Idi prolet* (The Spring Is Coming, 1939) and *Makedonska kitka* (Macedonian Posy, 1941) by Volče Naumčeski⁸⁷⁴ and, in particular, *Beli mugri* (White Dawns, 1939) by Kočo Racin.⁸⁷⁵

The Macedonians living within the borders of Bulgaria also developed a widespread literary and national activity. In addition to the plays of Vojdan Černodrinski,⁸⁷⁶ there appeared the celebrated dramatic piece *Ilinden* (1923) by Nikola Kirov Majski,⁸⁷⁷ *Narod i crkva* (People and Church); *Đuhot na Makedonija* (The Spirit of Macedonia) (1931) and *Pesnata na robot* (The Song of the Slave) by Nikola Drenkov, etc. Besides the individual books of poetry by Nikola Džerov, Dimitar Milenski, Nikola Kirov Majski, etc.,⁸⁷⁸ the following collections of verse were published: *Narodni bigori* (The Bitterness of the People) and *Oginot* (The Fire) (1938); *Lulkina pesna – Elegii* (Cradle Song – Elegies); *Goce Delčev – Poema* (Goce Delčev – A Poem), and *Prangi – Soneten venec* (Shackles – A Sonnet Sequence) (1939); *Lunja – Makedonska lirika* (Tempest – Macedonian Lyrics); *Ilinden – Poema* (Ilinden – A Poem), and *Čudna e Makedonija* (Macedonia is Marvellous) (1940); *Bie dvanaeset* (It Strikes Twelve, 1941) by Venko Markovski,⁸⁷⁹ and *M'skavici* (Flashes of Lightning, 1940) and *Peupo svetot* (Around the World on Foot, 1941) by Kole Nedelkovski.⁸⁸⁰

⁸⁷³D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonski otstih 1900-1944. Istražuvawa i materijali*, á-áá, Skopje, 1980. More than 120 poets are known to have written in Macedonian in this period.

⁸⁷⁴Volče Naumčeski, *Stihovi (1939-1941)*. Redakcija, predgovor i zabeleške d-r Blaže Ristovski, Skopje, 1979.

⁸⁷⁵Kočo Racin, *Stihovi i proza*. Uredil d-r Aleksandar Spasov, Skopje, 1966; Kočo Soljev Racin, *Izbrani dela* (á-á), Skopje, 1987; D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Kočo Racin. Istoriskoliteraturni istražuvawa*, 1983.

⁸⁷⁶Vojdan Černodrinski, *Sobrani dela*, ááá. Priredil Aleksandar Aleksičev, Skopje, 1976.

⁸⁷⁷*Makedonska drama među dvete svetovske vojni*, á, 17-74.

⁸⁷⁸D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Makedonski otstih 1900-1944*, á, 108-132.

⁸⁷⁹D-r Blaže Ristovski, *Portreti i procesi ...*, ááá, 431-473; Venko Markovski, *Glavni i poroi*. Izbor i predgovor Aleksandar Aleksičev, Skopje, 1992.

⁸⁸⁰Kole Nedelkovski, *Sobrano delo. Jubilejno izdanie po povod na 40-godišninata od smrtta na poetot-borec*. Predgovor, komentar, izbor i redakcija Todor Dimitrovski, Skopje, 1981.

There was an even greater number of Macedonian poets and writers in Bulgaria who used the official Bulgarian language. They not only published many individual works, but also important collections [Nikola Vapcarov, Angel Žarov (Mihail Smatrakalev), Anton Popov, Todor Šomov, Georgi Abadžiev, Kiril Manasiev (Večerin), etc.]. All of them, from all three parts of Macedonia, in 1936 founded in Sofia the **Macedonian Literary Circle**, which was active as part of the editorial board of *Makedonski Vesti*.⁸⁸¹ When the newspaper was banned and the Circle dissolved, the Macedonian activists set up a new association, *Nation and Culture* (1937), and later, via the **Journalists' Circle**, renewed the **Macedonian Literary Circle** (1938-1941),⁸⁸² which became the most active Macedonian national association of the period and the most successful organizer and propagator of Macedonian national thought. It was there that the history of the Macedonian revolutionary movement, *Ilindenska epopeja* (Ilinden Epic) by Angel Dinev, was prepared (1936).⁸⁸³ It was there, too, that the same author published the most outstanding book on Macedonian national development, *Makedonskite Sloveni* (The Macedonian Slavs, 1938). Towards the end of the book Dinev states: "The people who gave the alphabet to the entire Slavic world, who brought forth the great revolutionary and reformer Bogomil and the austere warrior Samuel; who lived for 19 whole years, from 1893 to 1912, in the revolutionary republic established secretly in the Sultan's state; who by self-denial created the Ilinden epic; who waged a bloody armed struggle against armed propaganda; who fought against the Sultan's troops in the streets of Constantinople — that people will never, never forget its historical past and, in spite of having no freedom whatsoever, will never lose its ethnic character, its spirit or its mother tongue."⁸⁸⁴

Historical and theoretical contributions on the Macedonian nation and culture started appearing especially in the 1930s, mostly from people within the **Macedonian progressive movement**. In 1933 Vasil Ivanovski published the pamphlet *The Ideas and Tasks of the Macedonian Progressive Movement*, and the newspaper *Makedonsko Zname* explained: "The Macedonian progressive movement is a national one, as its goal is the national liberation of Macedonia. It is not a party movement, nor a movement of a particular group or class, but according to its character it is broadly popular and democratic, as its very goal (the national liberation of Macedonia) is a broadly popular and democratic task."⁸⁸⁵ As it was

⁸⁸¹Bl aže Ri stovski , „Osnovite i koncepcii te na Makedonski ot literaturen kruž ok vo Sof i ja“ (1936), *Gl asnik*, HHÁH, 3, Skopje, 1985, 111-128.

⁸⁸²D-r Bl aže Ri stovski , *Port ret i i procesi ...*, áá, 1989, 486-532; Di mi tar Mi trev, *Makedonski ot lit erat uren kruž ok*, Skopje, 1977; Ni kol a J. Vapcarov, *Pesni za Tat kovinat a. Sobrani st i hovi*. P odgot ovka i prevod d-r Bl aže Ri stovski , Skopje, 1986.

⁸⁸³*Makedonski vesti* , áá, 73, Sof i ò, 8.H.1936, 3.

⁸⁸⁴Angel i Di nevi , *Makedonski t v sl avani* , Sof i ò, 1938, 72.

impossible, due to the different conditions in the countries that controlled Macedonia, to gain independence within the framework of a Balkan federation, the movement raised the principle of “the right to self-determination of the Macedonian people, including separation into an independent state-political unit”. The option of establishing “an autonomous national region (autonomous republic)” in one of the ruling countries was publicly announced, “until the other two parts of Macedonia are liberated, and all of them are separated from Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia to be united into a joint Macedonian state”.⁸⁸⁶

Yet the most important thing for the movement was the equitable settlement of the national question. As a result, numerous contributions were published dealing with the Macedonian nation, and Vasil Ivanovski published his detailed paper ‘Why We Macedonians are a Separate Nation’.⁸⁸⁷ The Comintern could not ignore this activity and assessed it from its own point of view: in early 1934 it was impelled to acknowledge officially the Macedonian national entity and the Macedonian language as separate in the Slavic world. This actually meant the **acknowledgement** of the century-long struggle of the Macedonian people for national affirmation and represented a very significant support aiding the final liberation. It can by no means be interpreted as the **creation** of the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language, as the Macedonians have always emphasized their slogan: “We must state clearly so that everybody can hear us that *we are neither Serbs nor Greeks or Bulgarians. We are Macedonians, an individual Macedonian nation*. It is only in this way that we can best defend the *individuality* of our movement and of our right to an independent Macedonian state.”⁸⁸⁸ Due to the fact that they could not freely express their programme objectives, the Macedonians published underground newspapers such as *Obedinist*, *Nožot*, *Makedonska Revoljucija* and *Makedonsko Edinstvo*,⁸⁸⁹ in which they raised high “the banner of the Macedonian revolution to win the right to self-determination for Macedonia until its separation into an individual political state unit, for a free and independent Macedonia of the Macedonian people”, for “[w]e are neither true Serbs, nor pure Bulgarians, nor are we Slavophone Hellenes, we are an individual Macedonian nation”.⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁸⁵*Makedonsko zname*, áá, 17, 14. Háá. 1933, 2.

⁸⁸⁶*Makedonsko zname*, áá, 18, 22. áá. 1934, 1.

⁸⁸⁷Bi stri š ki [Vasil I vanovski], „Zaè o ni e makedonci te sme ot del na naci ò?“, in: *Çet vbr-t i j kongres na Makedonski j Naroden S ŕioz v Ameri ka. Rezol ioci i , I zl ož eni j a*, Detroit , 1934, 42-55; *Trudova Makedoni j a*, á, 6, Detroit , Dekemvri 1934, 4-5.

⁸⁸⁸*I st ori ska vi st i na. Progresi vnat a opuit est vena javnost vo Bugari ja i Piri nska Makedoni ja za makedonskot o naci onal no prauawe. Dokument i , st udi i , rezol uci i , apel i i publi ci st i ŕki pri lozi 1896-1956. I zbor i redakci ja P ero Kor obar i d-r Or de I vanoski , Skopje, 1981, 79.*

⁸⁸⁹D-r Bl až e Ri stovski , *Port ret i i procesi ...*, ááá, 491-501.

The Macedonian national liberation programme defined in this way in the period prior to the Second World War was expressed through a large number of leaflets, proclamations, protests and public meetings, and also through individual publications, such as the banned periodicals *Goce* (1938)⁸⁹¹ and *Ilinden 1903* (1939).⁸⁹² Kosta Veselinov, a member of the Macedonian Literary Circle, started publishing a whole series of booklets as part of his **National Scientific Library: Nationally-Subjugated Peoples and National Minorities** (1938), *The Rebirth of Macedonia and the Ilinden Uprising* (1939) and *Fighters for National Freedom* (1940).⁸⁹³

As far as the Vardar section of Macedonia was concerned, the liberation movement turned entirely towards the **Regional Committee of the Communist Party in Macedonia**, as it was only there that they could see their future, warning: “Defend your people’s name and wage a struggle for popular rights and the freedom of Macedonia.”⁸⁹⁴ And when Professor Nikola Vulić, in 1939 and 1940, again authoritatively demanded that the name *Macedonia* should not be used, but *South Serbia*, there were protests from all sides: “The name Macedonia has not been imposed by force in recent times, but it is the name ‘South Serbia’, Professor, Sir, which has been introduced and used by Serbian chauvinists, imperialists and oppressors of the new age... The Macedonian ethnicity, i.e. nationality, exists although not in the form of a separate independent state at this moment... No historical rights, no traditions can justify the authority of Serbian imperialists in Macedonia... *First of all, the Macedonian language is neither Serbian nor Bulgarian, it is different, Macedonian...* The Macedonian nation has been formed historically, and is not the product of the mind of this or that person. The Macedonian people has been waging an organized struggle for its existence for more than 50 years... The crown of all this *was the great Ilinden Uprising and the Krušvo Popular Republic headed by the glorious Karev and Pito Gulev...* After the unsuccessful Ilinden Uprising, following 1903, we have had Serbophile, Bulgarophile and Graecophile propaganda in Macedonia... But neither the terror

⁸⁹⁰*Istorijska vestina...*, 130.

⁸⁹¹Mihailo Georgievski, „Eden dosega neobjaven vospomenatel en vesnik za Goce Delčev od 1938 godi na“, *Glasnik*, Hř á, 2, 1972, 35-50. The newspaper was the product of the *Nation and Culture* Circle in Sofia.

⁸⁹²D-r Blažeristovski, *Makedonski ot narod i makedonskat a naci ja*, áá, Skopje, 1983, 505.

⁸⁹³D-r Blažeristovski, *Portreti i procesi...*, ááá, 458-490. It is significant to mention that in the school year 1944/45 Veselinov’s second booklet became the first textbook of Macedonian national history in the newly-opened schools in the Macedonian state.

⁸⁹⁴*Dokument i materijali 1921-1941*, á, 2. Redakcija, prevodi komentari Ivan Katarxiev, Skopje, 1985, 316.

nor the propaganda, to this very day, has broken the Macedonian spirit of freedom and equality. The Macedonian people fought, fights and will fight together with all those oppressed until its full liberation...⁸⁹⁵

The national spirit of the liberation movement became particularly strong after the establishment of the new Regional Committee of the Communist Party in Macedonia headed by Metodija Šatorov Šarlo. This was a period when the largest number of underground materials in the Macedonian language were published and the time when the important Regional Conference was held (September 1940). Its Resolution actually presented the national programme of the struggle for “a free and independent Macedonia,”⁸⁹⁶ which the Macedonian people used in carrying out the mass Ilinden demonstrations in towns and taking part in the National Liberation War, with “their final goal: full liberation and equality for Macedonia — including the demand for secession into an individual state community”.⁸⁹⁷ This was confirmed by the mouthpieces of the Regional Committee, *Bilten* (1940) and *Iskra* (1940), which also pointed to the “final goal — a free Macedonian republic”.⁸⁹⁸

The situation among the Macedonians in the Aegean part of Macedonia was not very different in spite of the brutal measures applied by the authorities. Macedonian national consciousness and the Macedonian mother tongue were manifestly expressed considerably earlier than the Resolution of the Comintern. There were many examples; we shall quote only a few of them. For instance, three Macedonians (Stojan Balaska, G. Pečkov and T. Manov) killed a Graecophile in Lerin (Cantevski), and were sentenced to death and shot (1932). In court Balaska declared that he “was born a Macedonian and will die a Macedonian”, because as a former “member of the Macedonian national liberation organization”, he now, too, fought “for the freedom of Macedonia”.⁸⁹⁹ When the court ruling was read to Pečkov, and “when they stated that he had been born in Lerin and that he was Greek, he exclaimed: ‘No, no, I was born in Sofia, but I am not a Bulgarian, nor am I a Greek, I am a Macedonian’”.⁹⁰⁰ Unforgettable too are the words of Manov, who exclaimed just before being shot: “I am a Macedonian and will die a Macedonian! I am neither a Bulgarian nor a comitadji...”⁹⁰¹

⁸⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 318-322.

⁸⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 334-338.

⁸⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 382.

⁸⁹⁸*I legalni ot pečat na KPJ vo Vardarska Makedonija mežu dvet e svet ski vojni*, áá, 2. P odgot vi l d-r I van Kat ar xi ev, Skopje, 1983, 198.

⁸⁹⁹*Makedonskot oprauawe nast rani ci t e od „Ri zospast i s “mežu dvet e svet ski vojni .I zbor i r edakci ja Josi f P opovski , Skopje, 1982, 126.*

⁹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 162.

⁹⁰¹*Ibid.*, 162.

In November 1932 a Macedonian wrote extensively in the newspaper *O Neos Rizospastis* on the position of the Macedonian national minority in Greece and on the attitude and “patriotism” of the “liberators” towards “a single people — the Macedonian nationality — which is neither Bulgarian, nor Greek or Serbian, but — *Macedonian*”, because “[i]n Macedonia under Bulgaria, Greece or Serbia there are neither Greeks, nor Bulgarians or Serbs. There exist only Macedonians (of course, we are not referring to those who have recently settled in Macedonia)”. The reporter pointed out that during his visit to “the places and mountains in Macedonia (Kostur, Lerin)” what immediately came to mind was that they were “not at all Greek, or Bulgarian, or Serbian”. “There is something special in their clothes; the same refers to their language. Their Slavonic language resembles Bulgarian, but it is not the same. Speaking the Macedonian language, you can certainly communicate with the Serbs as well as the Bulgarians. That language is still spoken today by more than 100,000 people as *their mother tongue*. They do not know any other language. So many centuries have passed since the Slav element settled Macedonia that no one knows anything other than that he was born in that place and that he will die there. And that he is neither a Greek, nor a Bulgarian or a Serb.” As a result, the Macedonian reporter concluded: “[W]e are not dealing here with Greeks, or Bulgarians, or Serbs in Macedonia, but with a Macedonian people, with a Macedonian minority, which, despite all blows and despite all oppression, has preserved its economic and national existence and its distinct culture. In this case it means that the Macedonian people has national consciousness.” He also pointed out that “it is forbidden for the children, who are obliged to go to school in order to learn the Greek language, etc. [...] to speak their Macedonian mother tongue. If anything like that happens, the teacher confines the child in the school cellar for a day or frequently longer.” Inspectors and policemen kept vigil to prevent Macedonian from being spoken even at home, though, for instance, “no woman speaks Greek”. In 1931, for example, the Greek captain Vangelis in Lerin, “made a farmer black by beating him, because the latter spoke Macedonian”. Or “[i]n V’mbel, in the Kostur region, ten young people were beaten until they bled and then sentenced to prison terms, because they sang songs in their native tongue. The same happened in the village of Aposkep, where the peasants celebrated May Day by singing national-revolutionary songs and the Internationale, translated into Macedonian.”⁹⁰² Those Macedonians, in the words of another reporter, “clench their teeth, persistently speak their Macedonian language, proudly wear their Macedonian folk costumes and believe, hope and patiently and silently fight for a Macedonia of their own, for a free Macedonia”.⁹⁰³

⁹⁰²*Ibid.*, 134-138.

⁹⁰³*Ibid.*, 158.

In early September 1934 the **Macedonian Societies** from the Voden villages of Arsen and Vrtikop “thunderously” proclaimed: “We are neither Bulgarians nor Greeks! We are Macedonians! We will fight for full independence from the Bulgarian, Serbian and Greek yokes” and called upon the Macedonians from the Lerin and Enidže-Vardar regions to start publishing “a newspaper of the Macedonians from western Macedonia in our mother tongue”.⁹⁰⁴ In January 1935 a group of Macedonians joined the protests against the closure of Greek schools in Albania, saying: “We, the subjugated Macedonian minority, wholeheartedly wish that the demands of our brothers from northern Epirus be satisfied, as we, the Macedonians, are in the same position, under the yoke of the Greek government. We are also demanding before the entire working class and before the progressive press that they, too, raise their voice in favour of our rights. We also wish to speak our Macedonian language freely and to open our own schools, Macedonian ones, where our children will learn.”⁹⁰⁵

Such was the consciousness of the Macedonians from the Aegean part of Macedonia when the Second World War broke out and they joined the antifascist struggle.

But, undoubtedly, many thousands of Macedonian émigrés in Europe, and North and South America strongly supported Macedonian national affirmation in the inter-war period. In addition to the mouthpiece of IMRO (United), *Makedonsko Delo*, the following progressive newspapers appeared in the Macedonian Diaspora: *Makedonski Bjuletin* (Pontiac, 1930-1931), *Balkansko Sdruženie* (Detroit, 1931-1934), *Trudova Makedonija* (Detroit, 1934-1938), *Narodna Volja* (Detroit, 1938), *Edinstvo* (Toronto, 1936-1940), *Makedonski Glas* (Buenos Aires, 1935-1939), etc.⁹⁰⁶ The annual collections of printed materials from the congresses of the **Macedonian People’s League of America** were also of considerable importance. They paid special attention to the **Civil War in Spain**, where the Macedonian fighters called upon the congress of the Macedonian People’s League: “Explain to every Macedonian man and Macedonian woman that everyone who fights for the salvation of Spain from fascism at the same time fights for the liberation of Macedonia.”⁹⁰⁷

At this time when it was impossible for the Macedonians in Macedonia (in all its parts) to spread their ideas freely, all the more important official documents of the liberation movement were published in the Diaspora, manifesting the unity of

⁹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 226-227.

⁹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 249-250.

⁹⁰⁶Д-р Благовестовски, *Makedonski ot narod i makedonskat a naci ja*, 511-522.

⁹⁰⁷*Makedonci tь vь Ameri ka i borbat a na tь hni я narodъ za naci onal na nezavi si most ь na Makedonski я Narodенъ Съюзъ vь Ameri ka*, Madi soni , 1938, 29.

the Macedonian people from all parts of their fatherland, as “without the building of Macedonian unity the liberation of Macedonia is unthinkable, the completion of the national revolution is unthinkable”.⁹⁰⁸

Thus-prepared, the Macedonian people joined the anti-Hitler coalition in the Second World War. Therefore the activists from the inter-war period also became organizers and leaders of the armed national liberation struggle in all the parts of Macedonia. And thus there began the Second Ilinden.

⁹⁰⁸*Trudova Makedoni ja*, áá, 2. ě 1 i 1935, 1 and 3.