Giorgos Agelopoulos

Perceptions, Construction, and Definition of Greek National Identity in Late Nineteenth - Early Twentieth Century Macedonia[*]

We often think of nations as natural phenomena which have always existed in human history. Even when we do not think of nations as such, we sometimes imply that before nations there were equivalent corresponding well-defined categories (ethnic groups for example), and a continuity between these pre-existing units and nations is often established. This view is not only present in the context of the social sciences but also dominates international politics since the appearance of the Wilsonian and Leninist doctrines[1].

This paper aims to investigate the process of definition and creation of a Greek national identity in late nineteenth - early twentieth century Macedonia[2]. It is generally acknowledged that notions and the feeling of

1. Bringa T., "Nationality categories, national identification and national formation in 'multinational' Bosnia", *The Anthropology of East Europe Review*, (1993) p. 2; Hobsbawm, 1990, 40. A recent example of that is the recent U. N. Resolution 16/1992 of 21st February 1992, in which the terms National and Ethnic are defined as having an identical political meaning.

2. Since the problems with Macedonia even start from its definition it is necessary to explain that in this paper, the term Macedonia refers to a geographical region and not to a political, cultural, ethnic or state unit. This usage is preferred in order to avoid misunderstandings caused by the application of the term in current political discourse. In my paper I accept the definition of Macedonia proposed by Wilkinson, whose work is the most comprehensive and critical approach to the cartography of Macedonia. I should also note that this definition is accepted by the majority of scholars who most critically, and without any nationalistic prejudice, studied the area. Therefore, in this paper Macedonia is defined as the area bounded on the north by the Sar mountains, on the East by the Rhodope mountains, on the south by the Aegean Sea, Mt. Olympus and the Pindus Range, and on the west by lake Ohrid. Wilkinson H., *Maps and politics. A review of the ethnographic cartography of Mace-*

belonging to a nationality was introduced in rural Macedonia during this period. Broadly speaking, I perceive the creation of the Bulgarian Exarchate as the starting point of this period and Balkan Wars as the end of it. In urban areas a different process was followed since bourgeois populations were influenced by national movements earlier than rural ones.

The questions that I am going to address are: who were the Greeks of Macedonia during that period, what meant to be a Greek, how and why some people identify themselves as nationally Greeks. It should be clear that is not my intention to argue that a culturally Greek population did not existed in the area before that period. On a general theoretical level, the purpose of such an analysis is to highlight the limits in the continuity between ethnic groups/cultures and the nations which later develop (what I call the ethnic-nation continuum principle). Moreover, that national identity is often based on something other than cultural background or ethnic origins[3], and therefore ethnic ties should have a limited value in our explanation of the national identification process. We should perceive ethnic ties and origin as representations[4] imposed by nationalist scholars rather than as explanatory models. Our priority should be to study national identification not only as a content but as a process as well[5]. A process which is continually being created, maintained and changed.

My work is in agreement with the fundamental principle of what Smith called "the modernist approach"[6]. In other words I do accept that nations are modern phenomena. The definition of the nation is not of my concern in this paper. However, the point is that whatever definition of the nation we accept the problem of the relationship between a nation and pre-existing social entities (cultures, ethnic groups, etc.) still remains.

donia, Liverpool 1951; Jelavich C. and Jelavich B., *A history of East Central Europe*, Vol. III, *The establishment of the Balkan national States, 1804-1920*, London 1977, p. 207; Jelavich B., *History of the Balkans, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Vol. I, Cambridge 1983, p. 89; Kofos E., *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki 1964.

3. This point is even accepted by Smith A. D., *The ethnic origin of nations*, London 1986.

4. Holy L. - Stuchlick M., *Actions, Norms and Representations*, Cambridge 1983.

5. Schein M. D., "When is an ethnic group? Ecology and class structure in Northern Greece, *Ethnography*, Vol. XIV, 1975, p. 83.

6. Smith A. D., *The ethnic origin of nations*, London 1986.

To reject the ethnic-nation continuum in the case of the Balkans, and especially in the case of Macedonia, has significant political implications. This is because the most common confusion in the history of the area is between cultural or ethnic identity and national identification. The problem arises from an ethnocentric and basically nationalistic historical perception of identities, which presupposes that the way Balkan people think and define themselves in the present as members of a nation has not changed during the centuries.

In order to overcome such problems I remove the focus of my analysis removed from the social structure macro-level to the micro-level of the individual. Theoretical approaches which examine, for example, the "ethnic origins of nations"[7] often fail to perceive the most dynamic characteristics of the national identification process. This is because they focus on the macro-level of the social structure. As a consequence they are faced with serious problems when explaining an individual's actions. However, as M. Banton has recently pointed out explicitly, if there are multination states and multistate nations, then the means towards understanding national identification lies in the individual[8].

I will argue that people who belonged to the same ethnic group or shared the same culture in Macedonia during the period under examination, very often identified themselves with different nations. Some Macedonian Slavs, for example, identified with the Greeks and called themselves Greeks, while others identified with the Bulgarian Exarchate and/or the I.M.R.O. Macedonia and the Balkans in general are without doubt an extreme case of imagined communities[9] which have been imposed on to local populations. However, this remarkable case is useful to illustrate the superficial character of national identities, and to remind us that the one-to-one relationship between ethnic groups/ cultures and nations is a reality only in some cases.

It should be stressed that this analysis focus on a specific historical period. The definition and construction of national identities in Macedonia does continue beyond the period we examine in this paper.

7. *Ibid.*

8. Banton M., "Modelling ethnic and national relations", *Annual Lecture of the Ethnic and Racial Studies Journal*, London School of Economics, London 1993.

9. Anderson B., *Imagined Communities*, London 1983.

National identities are of a dynamic character. But such an analysis is beyond the interests of the present paper.

Another point which needs to be clarified is that the views of those who participated or followed the events of that period, should not be taken as having a face value. It is not to be forgotten that every one of them had his/her own political agenda. In this paper I attempt to use the available historical resources (memoirs, books, newspaper articles, etc) as critically as possible. This critical perspective is secured by a triangulation of the various views proposed on the process of nation building in rural Macedonia.

Meaning and content of cultural and politico-religious identities in the Balkans before the nineteenth century

The Byzantine and the Ottoman administrations stimulated various people and cultures, which were previously separated, and produced an amalgamation of populations out of which new social groups emerged. Clearly defined boundaries were completely alien to the various populations which lived there side-by-side[10]. Prior to the mid eighteenth century, the concept of nationality had not been fully articulated as a criterion for the creation of political union in the Balkans[11]. Generally in pre-modern periods culture rarely assumed any political significance at all[12]. Since religion was then thought to be the main determinant of identity[13], people were divided according to their faith. All the Orthodox Christians inside the Ottoman Empire, irrespective of their culture, constituted the Rum Millet and were called Rums (Romios - Romii). The

10. Hosch E., *The Balkans*, London 1968, p. 14.

11. Simic A., "Obstacles to the development of a Yugoslavian National consciousness: ethnic identity and folk culture in the Balkans", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, Vol. 1, No 1, 1991, p. 24; Pearson R., *National minorities in Eastern Europe 1848-1945*, London 1983, p. 12; Dimaras K. T., *Ελληνικός Ρομαντισμός*, Athens 1985; Kitromilides P., "Imagined communities and the origins of the national question in The Balkans", in *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, edit. by Blinkhorn M. and Veremis Th., Athens 1990.

12. Smith A. D., *National identity*, London 1991, p. 10; Gellner E., *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford 1983, p. 75.

13. Kofos E., "National heritage and national identity in nineteenth and twentieth century Macedonia", in *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, edit. by Blinkhorn M. and Veremis Th., Athens 1990, p. 104; Kitromilides P., *op.cit.*, p. 25.

term "Romios" expressed a politico-religious affiliation[14] related to the specific way that populations were politically organised inside the Ottoman Empire and not a national one.

Those who shared a Greek cultural background inside the Rum Millet generally constituted a higher social stratum. This is a matter well explained by a number of historians and, for the purpose of this paper, there is no need to discuss it further. Since the seventeenth century, Greek had been the language of culture and business in the central and eastern Balkan zones[15]. The "superior" status of the Greek speaking people inside the Rum Millet led to a kind of dominance of Greek culture over other Orthodox Christians. As a consequence "Balkan merchants, regardless of their ethnic origins, generally spoke Greek and often assumed Greek names"[16]. Men of wealth took pride in being called Greek and Orthodox Albanians, Vlach, Macedo-Slav and Bulgarian merchants of the eighteenth century normally identified themselves as Greeks[17].

On the other hand, to be called Bulgarian indicated a lower social status and a peasant culture. The term *"Bulgar"* referred to a person who was a poor, Slav-speaking peasant[18]. According to an old Macedonian proverb, "the Bulgar tills the land, the Greek owns the plow"[19].

The definition and construction of a nationally Greek population in Macedonia

This situation was more or less a reality in Macedonia until the late eighteenth century. In Macedonia, "until the beginning of the nineteenth

14. Vermeulen H., "Greek cultural dominance among the Orthodox population of Macedonia during the last period of Ottoman rule", in *Cultural Dominance in the Mediterranean area*, edit. by A. Blok and H. Driessen, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmege 1984, p. 231.

15. Stoianovich T., "The conquering Balkan Orthodox merchant", *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 20, 1966, p. 290; Macdermott M., *A history of Bulgaria (1393-1885)*, London 1962, p. 118; Kofos E., *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki 1964, p. 12, Mishew D., *The Bulgarians in the Past*, New York 1971, p. 194.

16. Stoianovich T., *op.cit.*, p. 291; Herzfeld M., *Ours Once More*, New York 1986, p. 47.

17. Stoianovich T., *op.cit.*, p. 310-311.

18. Vermeulen H., *op.cit.*, p. 234.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

century, the Slavs, Greeks and Vlachs still constituted one Christian community, united in the Rum Millet. A peasant felt himself first of all as a member of a family, a village community and maybe a small culturally distinguishable unit, and secondly, Rum"[20]. The creation of the major Balkan states radically changed the situation. The way people defined themselves and imputed meaning to the terms Bulgarian and Greek changed under the influence of national movements which later developed in the Balkans. The crucial question, of course, is how the population was actually divided, given the differentiations and identity boundaries existing.

National propaganda put a difficult choice before the populations of Macedonia: people had to choose a national identity. That was a way of thinking foreign especially to the peasants[21]. Nationalist activists of the Bulgarian Exarchate and/or the I.M.R.O. embodied the term Bulgar with a national meaning. Greek nationalists introduced the term Hellenas which had strong national connotations[22]. Nobody could any more be a Bulgar and a Hellenas at the same time.

With the new Hellene and national Bulgarian concepts, existing socio-cultural divisions were translated by nationalists into national ones[23]. Those who had a higher social status, and therefore were some-

20. *Ibid.* The Serb geographer Cvijic and the Greek philologist Tsioulkas have both emphasized the socio-cultural dimensions of the term Bulgar, and have argued that it had no national implications. Matzureff G. D., *The concept of a Macedonian nation as a new dimension in Balkan politics*, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Washington 1978, p. 55; Wilkinson H., *Maps and politics. A review of the ethnographic cartography of Macedonia*, Liverpool 1951, p. 149; Tsioulkas K. I., *Συμβολαί εις την διγλωσσίαν των Μακεδόνων*, Αθήνα 1907, p. 110.

21. Vermeulen H., *op.cit.*, p. 239.

22. *Op.cit.*, p. 232. It is true that the term *Hellenas* exists in the work or some late Byzantine philosophers but its use is limited to the work of a few scholars and in any case did not had national connotations. Campbell J. K. and Sherrard P., *Modern Greece*, London 1986, p. 24; Fine J., *The late Medieval Balkans*, Michigan 1987, p. 540-542; Svoronos G., *Histoire de la Grece Moderne*, Paris 1972, p. 23; Kyriakidou-Nestoros, *Λαογραφικά Μελετήματα*, Αθήνα 1975; Dimaras K. T., *Ελληνικός Ρομαντισμός*, Αθήνα 1985; Herzfeld M., *Ours Once More*, N.Y. 1986; Tziovas D., *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο*, Αθήνα 1989; Andreadis G., *Τα παιδιά της Αντιγόνης*, Αθήνα 1989; Magdalino P., "Hellenism and nationalism in Byzantium", in *Tradition and transformation in medieval Byzantium*, Aldershot 1991.

23. Kitromilides P., *Ethnicity, culture and national identity in the Ottoman Balkans during the eighteenth century*, paper presented at the First Skiliter Library Colloquium on

how influenced or intended to be influenced by Greek culture, identified themselves as Greeks. They were not Romios any more they were Hellenes. As Brailsford puts it: "so far as there is a real Greek party among (the Macedonian Slavs) it consists mainly of the wealthier peasants —priests, moneylenders, storekeepers and innkeepers— and even these men are Greek largely because the existing entente between Turks and Greeks procures them the favour of the authorities"[24].

Similarly the lower social categories of the population tended to become Bulgarians[25]. Cultural distinctions were re-defined by nationalists into national terms and thus became national characteristics. To use Hechter's terminology, the cultural division of labour amongst the population of Macedonia was transformed to national differentiation[26]. But this was a rather selective process, and in any case it followed the establishment of the various nationalistic movements in the area. In other words, it was a contributing factor towards the whole process and not the cause of it.

However, although Greek (Hellenic) and Slav cultures were nationalised by nationalists, the divisions of the population did not take such absolute forms. It would be misleading to conclude that rich "Bulgars" or poor "Greeks" did not existed. This can be understood by bearing in mind the meaning of the terms Greek and Bulgar, and the previous flexible structure of identities among the local population[27]. It would be misleading to conclude that all those who shared a Slav peasant culture supported the national propaganda of the Bulgarian Exarchate and/or the I.M.R.O. My disagreement with those who look for socio-cultural characteristics and structures to explain national identification, or preference for one national group or another in the case of the Macedonian Slavs, focuses on this point[28]. Other factors influenced the decision of

Ottoman History, Newman College, University of Cambridge, April 1992.

24. Brailsford H. N., *Macedonia, its races and their future*, London 1906, p. 198.

25. This also explains the strong socialist element of Slav nationalism (Bulgarian Academy Sciences, *Macedonia: Documents and material*, Sofia 1978, p. 602).

26. Hechter M., "Group formation and the cultural division of labour", *American Journal of Sociology* (1978) Vol. 84.

27. By "flexible" I mean that before the terms *Greek* and Bulgar acquired national connotations, it was possible for a Bulgar to become Greek. That was simply a case of upward social mobility.

28. For example: Boeshoten Van R., *Politics, class and identity in rural Macedonia*,

national identification as well.

Various factors could affect the decision of national identification. The decision of belonging to one national group or another depended on the needs, priorities and fears of both material and mental character of those who were taking the decision. That could be a communal priority, a family priority, a household priority or a personal priority. The available resources, mainly memoirs and reports from those who participated in the Macedonian struggle[29], are revealing.

For example, a river was claimed by two different communities. One of them identified with the Greeks, thus the other identified with the Bulgarian Exarchate and/or the I.M.R.O. Sometimes disagreement between patrigroups of the same village, because of quarrels related to the land available, were responsible for national divisions. Gounaris in his analysis mentions a variety of additional reasons for choosing a nationality, such as: (i) existing affiliations with a Balkan state due to periodical migration movements, (ii) indirect or direct taxes established by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, (iii) locality; in other words whether a community was native, or originally moved into Macedonia from Epirus during the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries[30].

The discrepancies between landlords and tenant farmers, merchants and producers, capitalists and workers were occasionally translated into a national struggle[31]. The Christian communities were, for various reasons, divided into factions. Such divisions were cultivated and manipulated by nationalists[32]. According to Mazarakis, a Greek partisan leader: "the growing support for the Bulgarian Exarchate in Macedonia was a result of inter-communal disputes. The opposition inside a village community council tended very often to become Bulgarian only because the majority was Greek"[33]. Abbot who travelled to Macedonia twenty five

paper presented in the conference "The Anthropology of Ethnicity: a critical evaluation", University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam 1993.

29. The term Macedonian struggle is used to define the fighting between the various Balkan nationalist movement in Macedonia at the beginning of this century.

30. Gounaris B., *The events of 1903 in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki 1993.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Mazarakis-Enian K. I., "Ο Μακεδονικός Αγώνας - Απομνημονεύματα", in *Ο Μακεδονικός Αγώνας - Απομνημονεύματα*, edit. Svolopoulos K., Thessaloniki 1984, p. 203.

years before Mazarakis, also pays attention to the fact that the Christian communities were divided between "the friends and the enemies of the bishop"[34]. As Gounaris and Vermeulen explain, these intercommunal divisions were finally nationalised[35].

Existing cultural affiliations were important, but not important enough. Otherwise there would have been no reason for the Macedonian struggle to have taken place: every Slav peasant village was going to support the Bulgarian Exarchate and/or the I.M.R.O. That would have meant the domination of village communities by the Bulgarian Exarchate and/or the I.M.R.O. north of the Kastoria - Yiannitsa - Paggaio Mnts line. In this area the majority of the population was of a Slav peasant culture. Moreover, if we accept that cultural and national identification coincided we cannot explain the phenomenon of "national mobility" which was very common in Macedonia between 1870 and 1920 (this will be further explained below).

This was the situation in Macedonia. To be more explicit, on the peripheries of the area, next to the borders of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia, national affiliations were more precise and stable. But in the large intermediary zone the population was mixed and of uncertain and mobile nationality[36].

Because of these peculiarities of national identification, some odd situations appeared: for example members of the same family could belong to different nations[37]. Villages were divided, parishes were divided, patrigroups were divided; but all these people were of the same socio-cultural background and they were all Slav peasants[38]. On the other hand people belonging to different cultures (culturally Greek bourgeois, culturally Greek peasants, Sarakatsan nomads, Vlachs pastoralists and traders, Slav peasants) identified themselves as Greeks.

It is worth looking at some examples. It was not uncommon to find fathers, who were themselves officially Greek, equally proud of bringing into the world Greek, Serbian, Bulgarian and Rumanian children[39]. P.

34. Abbott G. F., *The tale of a tour in Macedonia*, London 1903, p. 85.
35. Gounaris B., *op.cit.*, p. 8; Vermeullen H., *op.cit.*, p. 245.
36. Kofos E., *Nationalism...*, p. 24.
37. Vermeullen H., *op.cit.*, p. 240.
38. Gounaris B., *op.cit.*
39. Brailsford H. N., *op.cit.*, p. 103.

Argiropoulos, a Greek journalist and activist in Macedonia, reports a more revealing case. "I remember", he writes, "a wealthy villager from Poroia who didn't manage to secure a scholarship for his first son to enter a Greek High School. Thus he sent him to a Rumanian High school and the result, after a few years, was the creation of a Rumanian commune inside the village of Poroia. Some years later he didn't manage to find a scholarship for his second son to enter a Greek or even a Rumanian High school, so he sent him to a Bulgarian one. The result was that five years later, on his second son's return, a Bulgarian commune was established in the village of Poroia"[40]. So the father was a Greek, the first son a Rumanian and the second a Bulgarian.

K. Mazarakis, another Greek military officer who was a leader of a Greek partisan band, kept a diary in which we can read his comments about his fellow partisans. His first man in charge was called Mitsis. "Mitsis was a brave man", he writes. "He was huge and very strong. He was not even able to spell a word in Greek but he was a true Hellenas deep in his heart"[41]. One more case from Mazarakis' memoirs is also interesting: "Vlachos Tsamis was the leader of one of the strongest Rumanian military bands in Macedonia. He was finally defeated by his son, called Tsamopoulos, who was a pure Greek nationalist"[42].

Very often people, families, households, patrigroups, parishes and villages who identified themselves as Greeks turned into supporters of the Bulgarian Exarchate and/or the I.M.R.O. and vice versa. What is astonishing is that sometimes they turned back again. Brailsford reports that villages shifted "twice or thrice in a year"[43]. I call this phenomenon "national mobility" and its implications will be further examined in the following paragraphs. Vermeulen argues that whole villages could change "from being Greek to Bulgarian or vice versa depending on which side offered free or cheap education"[44]. P. Melas in his last letter reports the case of someone who initially identified himself as Greek, then decided

40. Argiropoulos P. A., "Ο Μακεδονικός Αγώνας - Απομνημονεύματα", in *Ο Μακεδονικός Αγώνας - Απομνημονεύματα*, edit. Svolopoulos K., Thessaloniki 1984, p. 46.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 168. Tsamis is the Vlach surname and Tsamopoulos is its Greek version.

43. Brailsford H. N., *op.cit.*, p. 167.

44. Vermeullen H., *op.cit.*, p. 240.

to send his children to a Rumanian school and supported the Rumanian propaganda, but finally changed again and returned to the Greek side. Mazarakis also reports the case of the priest of the village of Mesimeri. "The priest", he writes, "was an ex-Greek who turned into Bulgarian because of money"[45].

Similar was the situation among the rest of the national groups in Macedonia but their case is not the focus of this paper. The reader can find some amusing but also interesting examples of national mobility recorded in the documents published by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in 1978 under the title "Macedonia - Documents and Material"[46].

In conclusion, as Gounaris argues, the phenomenon of national mobility was not the exception but the rule among the Macedonian Slavs[47]. The same could be argued in a limited degree for the Vlachs. In his book Brailsford includes a anecdote which alone reveals the situation extraordinary clearly. He writes: "I have heard a witty French consul declare that with a fund of a million francs he would undertake to make all Macedonia French. He would preach that the Macedonians are the descendants of the French crusaders who conquered Salonika in the twelfth century, and the francs would do the rest"[48].

The above discussion illustrates that identification with a nationality was primarily a political decision, very often totally irrelevant to the cultural identity of the actors. This does not imply that a "free market model" can be applied to explain national identification in Macedonia. Although, as has already been mentioned, the decision of belonging to one national group or another depended on the needs and priorities of those who were taking the decision, it does not follow that it was a freely conducted decision. In any case, as Barth put it "choice is not synonymous with freedom"[49]. Macedonian villages, families, and per-

---

45. Mazarakis-Enian K. I., *op.cit.*, p. 249.

46. See the cases of R. Zhinzifov (p. 154) and D. Karamfilovich (p. 196). Examples of famous persons who changed nationality are more widely known, for instance D. Vlachov and the Miladinov brothers. Tachiaos A. N., *The Bulgarian national awaking and its spread into Macedonia,* Thessaloniki 1990, p. 28.

47. Gounaris B., *op.cit.*, p. 13.

48. Brailsford H. N., *op.cit.*, p. 103.

49. Barth Fr., *Process and form in social life,* London 1981, p. 89.

sons during that period had no alternative other than to choose a nationality irrespective of their own feelings. They had to do that to survive since in an environment where "life has lost its value and peace its meaning"[50]. Identification with a nationality meant that at least one of the parties fighting was willing to protect its family or village from the others.

Even during the Ilinden rising in 1903, the majority of the villages in western Macedonia supported the rebels because they had no alternative. They knew very well that if they did not support the rebels, their villages would be burnt by I.M.R.O. bands. Moreover, they also knew very well that by definition the Ottoman army would burn every village in the area, irrespective of the part the village had taken in the rising. Brailsford, although quite sympathetic to the I.M.R.O. movement, accepted that "it was a choice between having your village burned or having it burned and being massacred as well. Most villagers preferred the lesser evil and took to the mountains, becoming thereby rebels by definition"[51].

As for the reasons for the existence of national mobility, Brailsford comments are as follows: "they shift their allegiance year by year according to what they have to fear from the hostility of the Greek Bishops or the Bulgarian Committee"[52]. This is because, in Macedonia "fear was more than an emotion,... fear was the dominant, the everpresent motive"[53].

Although the I.M.R.O. bands practised the most violent methods[54], Greek, Rumanian and Serbian bands were all participating in "the glorious fight". Brailsford's explanations are revealing: "the atmosphere in Macedonia is so poisoned with nationalism that the most enlightened

50. Brailsford H. N., *op.cit.*, p. 159.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 161. Vakalopoulos makes a similar point. Vakalopoulos K., *Η Μακεδονία στα πλαίσια της Βαλκανικής πολιτικής*, Thessaloniki 1987, p. 60-61.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 36. It should be noted that Brailsford's comments refer to the period just after the Ilinden rising, i.e. the most violent period of the Macedonian struggle. However, violence prevailed in Macedonia for almost three decades.

54. Brailsford, *op.cit.*; Duncan P. M., *The politics of terror*, Duke University Press, Durham 1988. R. Hickel, an Austrian Diplomat affiliated to the Austro-Hungarian "Konsulat" of Thessaloniki, wrote in one of his reports that I.M.R.O. practices reminded him of the "Maffia" (Gounaris B., *op.cit.*, p. 36).

patriot becomes corrupted against his will"[55]. As Duncan puts it, the nationalists' politics in Macedonia were basically "the politics of terror"[56].

Mazarakis writes in his memoirs that "we had to persuade them that they were Greeks"[57]; and "blood and guns were the ways to persuade a village to become Greek or Bulgar"[58]. Villages were converted by force, by threats or by persuasion[59]. Another Greek activist argues that the Macedonian population "will go where the wind blows", meaning that they were willing to identify themselves with any nation which was about to become the dominant power in the area[60]. Brailsford has similar views: "the Macedonians are Bulgarians today [1905] because a free and progressive Bulgaria has known how to attract them"[61]. "Half of the men and most of the women would welcome tranquillity beneath any flag, and call themselves Manchus or Hottentots if under these names they might plough their fields undisturbed and tramp to market without fear of assassination"[62].

Conclusions: In the wonderland of nationalism

To conclude, it should be stressed that the decision of identification with a nationality during that period in Macedonia was a political decision very often irrelevant to the ethnic or cultural identity of the actors. It was taken according to the needs, priorities and fears of those who were taking the decision, but it does not follow that it was a free choice[63]. It was a political decision taken inside a very specific environment and therefore primarily forced by the circumstances, the politics of

55. Brailsford, *op.cit.*, p. 123.
56. Duncan, *op.cit.*
57. Mazarakis, *op.cit.*, p. 216.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 251.
59. Brailsford, *op.cit.*, p. 72.
60. Argiropoulos, *op.cit.*, p. 27.
61. Brailsford, *op.cit.*, p. 103.
62. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
63. In this paper I am concerned with the national identification process in Macedonia during a specific period. My argument can not be applied to explain recent phenomena, such as the cases of those who are involved in what they argue to be a Macedonian human rights movement in Greek Macedonia.

terror of the nationalistic movements. As Kitromilides in his critical approach to the national movements in the Balkans argued: "the Macedonian question could easily be understood as imposing 'imagined communities' on local populations"[64]. Ethnic origins and cultural background do have a limited value in our explanation of the national identification process in Macedonia during the late nineteenth - early twentieth century. The one-to-one relationship between ethnic groups, cultures and nations is a reality only in some cases.

We should perceive nationalities in Macedonia during that period as groups of people who because of their political motivations acted on the basis of supposed or real cultural backgrounds rather than ethnically or culturally homogenous units[65]. It would be more appropriate to discuss, as Kofos has done, about "the Greek element", "the Bulgarian element", etc.[66]; or to discuss about "the Greek party", "the Bulgarian party", "the Serbian party", etc., as Brailsford has done[67], than about Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs.

Existing complex categories and identities (Greek, Bulgar, etc.) were nationalised, re-evaluated and given new dimensions and content. Cultures were nationalised but in a quite imperfect, sketchy, selective and deficient way. Furthermore, this followed the establishment of the various nationalistic movements in the area. In other words it was not one of their causes. Existing political differentiations were given a national dimension, and from that moment political competition took place using nationalist terminology.

In a sense identities were treated as symbols. People continued to use the same names ("Greek", "Bulgar", "Rum", etc.) but with different meanings. As A. P. Cohen argues, sharing a symbol does not necessarily means sharing its meanings[68]. New multiple meanings lead to the creation of contradictions and ambiguities.

As it is obvious from our analysis it is not possible to determine any definite ethnic or cultural characteristics which were common among all those who identify themselves as nationally Greeks during that period in

---

64. Kitromilides, *op.cit.*, p. 43.
65. Gounaris B., *op.cit.*, p. 14; Brailsford, *op.cit.*, p. 72.
66. Kofos E., *op.cit.*
67. Brailsford, *op.cit.*
68. Cohen A., *The symbolic construction of the community*, London 1985, p. 15.

Macedonia. In the light of this conclusion it is suggested that the obfuscation surrounding the issue of national identification in Macedonia can be overcome by asking "*who were those who identify themselves as nationally Greeks in Macedonia*" rather than "which were the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the nationally Greek population of Macedonia". In other words we should shift our focus from "the Greek as a person" to "*a person as a Greek*". We should redirect the analysis from looking for the substance and essence of Greek national identity ("Greekness" - "Hellenicity" - "Ελληνικότητα") to *the boundary which defines and produces it historically.*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott G. F., 1903, *The tale of a tour in Macedonia*, Arnold, London.

Anderson B., 1983, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London.

Ανδρεάδης Γ., 1989, *Τα παιδιά της Αντιγόνης*, Καστανιώτης, Αθήνα.

Αρχείο Μακεδονικού Αγώνα Π. Δέλτα - Απομνημονεύματα Γ. Καραβαγγέλη, Γ. Δικόνημου Μακρή, Π. Παπατζανετέα, 1984, Ι.Μ.Χ.Α., Θεσσαλονίκη.

Αργυρόπουλος Π. Α., 1984, "Ο Μακεδονικός Αγώνας - Απομνημονεύματα", στο *Ο Μακεδονικός Αγώνας - Απομνημονεύματα*, επιμ. Κ. Σβολόπουλου, Ι.Μ.Χ.Α., Θεσσαλονίκη.

Βαχαλόπουλος Κ., 1987, *Η Μακεδονία στα πλαίσια της Βαλκανικής πολιτικής*, Μπαρμπουνάκης, Θεσσαλονίκη.

Banton M., 1993, "Modelling ethnic and national relations", *Annual Lecture of the Ethnic and Racial Studies Journal*, London School of Economics, London.

Barth Fr., 1981, *Process and form in social life*, Routledge, London.

Boeshoten Van R., 1993, *Politics, class and identity in rural Macedonia*, paper presented in the conference "The Anthropology of Ethnicity: a critical evaluation", University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam.

Brailsford H. N., 1906, *Macedonia, its races and their future*, Methuen, London.

Bringa T., 1993, "Nationality categories, national identification and national formation in 'multinational' Bosnia", *The Anthropology of East Europe Review*, Cornell University Press.

Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1978, *Macedonia: Documents and material*, Institute of History, Sofia.

Campbell J. K. and Sherrard P., 1986, *Modern Greece*, Ernest Benn Limited, London.

Cohen A., 1985, *The symbolic construction of the community*, Tavistok Publications, London.

Δημαράς Κ. Τ., 1985, *Ελληνικός Ρομαντισμός*, Ερμής, Αθήνα.

Duncan P. M., 1988, *The politics of terror*, Duke University Press, Durham, U.S.A.

Fine J., 1987, *The late Medieval Balkans*, Univ. of Michigan Press, Michigan.

Gellner E., 1983, *Nations and Nationalism*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.

Γούναρης Β. (επιμ.), 1993, "Εθνοτικές ομάδες και κομματικές παρατάξεις στη Μακεδονία των Βαλκανικών πολέμων", ανακοίνωση στο συνέδριο *Τα 80 χρόνια των Βαλκανικών πολέμων*, Εταιρία Λογοτεχνικού και Ιστορικού Αρχείου, Αθήνα.

Gounaris B. (edit.), 1993, *The events of 1903 in Macedonia*, Museum of the Macedonian Struggle Publications, Thessaloniki.

Hechter M., 1978, "Group formation and the cultural division of labour", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 84.

Herzfeld M., 1986, *Ours Once More*, Pella, N.Y.

Holy L. - Stuchlick M., 1983, *Actions, Norms and Representations*, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge.

Hosch E., 1968, *The Balkans*, Faber and Faber, London.

Jelavich C. and Jelavich B., 1977, *A history of East Central Europe, Vol. III. The establishment of the Balkan national States, 1804-1920*, Univ. of Washington Press, London.

Jelavich B., 1983, *History of the Balkans, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Vol. I, Cambridge Univ. Press, Cambridge.

Kitromilides P., 1990, "Imagined communities and the origins of the national question", in

The Balkans in Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality, edit. by Blinkhorn M. and Veremis Th., ELIAMEP, Athens.

Kitromilides P., 1992, *Ethnicity, culture and national identity in the Ottoman Balkans during the eighteenth century*, paper presented at the First Skilliter Library Colloquium on Ottoman History, Newman College, University of Cambridge, April 1992.

Kofos E., 1964, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Institute of Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki.

Kofos E., 1990, "National heritage and national identity in nineteenth and twentieth century Macedonia", in *Modern Greece: Nationalism and Nationality*, edit. by Blinkhorn M. and Veremis Th., ELIAMEP, Athens.

Κυριακίδου Νέστορος Α., 1975, *Λαογραφικά Μελετήματα*, Νέα Σύνορα, Αθήνα.

Macdermott M., 1962, *A history of Bulgaria (1393-1885)*, Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.

Magdalino P., 1991, "Hellenism and nationalism in Byzantium", in *Tradition and transformation in medieval Byzantium*, Varirum, Aldershot.

Matzureff G. D., 1978, *The concept of a Macedonian nation as a new dimension in Balkan politics*, unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, The American University, Washington.

Μαζαράκης-Αινιάν Κ. Ι., 1984, "Ο Μακεδονικός Αγώνας - Απομνημονεύματα", στο *Ο Μακεδονικός Αγώνας - Απομνημονεύματα*, επιμ. Κ. Σβολόπουλου, Ι.Μ.Χ.Α., Θεσσαλονίκη.

Mishew D., 1971, *The Bulgarians in the Past*, Arno Press, N.Y.

Pearson R., 1983, *National minorities in Eastern Europe 1848-1945*, McMillan Press, London.

Schein M. D., 1975, "When is an ethnic group? Ecology and class structure in Northern Greece", *Ethnography*, Vol. XIV.

Simic A., 1991, "Obstacles to the development of a Yugoslavian National consciousness: ethnic identity and folk culture in the Balkans", *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, Vol. 1, No 1.

Smith A. D., 1986, *The ethnic origin of nations*, London.

Smith A. D., 1991, *National identity*, Penguin, London.

Stoianovich T., 1966, "The conquering Balkan Orthodox merchant", *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 20.

Svoronos G., 1972, *Histoire de la Grece Moderne*, Presses Universitaires edition de France, Paris.

Tachiaos A. N., 1990, *The Bulgarian national awaking and its spread into Macedonia*, Society for Macedonian Studies, Thessaloniki.

Τσιούλκας Κ. Ι., 1907 (1991 επανέκδοση), *Συμβολαί εις την διγλωσσίαν των Μακεδόνων*, Δημιουργία - Χαρίσσης, Αθήνα.

Τζιόβας Δ., 1989, *Οι μεταμορφώσεις του εθνισμού και το ιδεολόγημα της ελληνικότητας στο μεσοπόλεμο*, Οδυσσέας, Αθήνα.

Vermeulen H., 1984, "Greek cultural dominance among the Orthodox population of Macedonia during the last period of Ottoman rule", in *Cultural Dominance in the Mediterranean area*, edit. by A. Blok and H. Driessen, Katholieke Universiteit Nijmege.

Wilkinson H., 1951, *Maps and politics. A review of the ethnographic cartography of Macedonia*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool.

Dept of Social Anthropology
University of Cambridge