

On the Macedonian Question: In the Beginning was the Word

by Wolf Oschlies (Macedonian Review, 3/1983)

If my neighbor is happy, my own work will go easier, too (Macedonian proverb)

Twofold congratulations are due: to the Europäische Rundschau for its splendid article by Nino Ninow (in No. 3/1982) and to the author himself for his comments - seldom has it been possible to read Bulgaria's classic position on the topic of Macedonia so conclusively, so logically, quite simply so "neatly" put. Not in Sofia publications such as the brochure "The Macedonia Question" that sent out international waves in 1968, nor in the emigrant Bulgarian press such as the "Makedonska Tribuna", published in Indianapolis, which, for all its opposition to the "People's Republic of Bulgaria", so completely concurs with the official line in its rejection of Macedonian autonomy that it reprinted the said brochure without more ado.[1] No, it is worthy of note what brilliance of formulation Ninow still manages to extract from such an oft-treated topic as the so-called "Macedonian Question", and one has to read very closely to detect the weak points in his arguments. There are one minor and three major ones. The minor one could in principle be disregarded, but because the material in question - the "Bulgarian Folksongs" compendium by the brothers Dimitria and Konstantin Miladinov, which appeared in Zagreb in 1861 - has so often been presented as evidence of the Bulgarian identity of the Macedonians, there are a few words that should be said: the collection includes 660 folksongs, exactly 77 of them Bulgarian, the rest Macedonian. At the time of its publication there was no such thing as a "Bulgaria" nor a "Macedonia", since both were part of the Turkish Empire - with the result that the Bulgars and the Macedonians were united by a common interest, interest in liberation from the Turks. Seen from this aspect, the purpose of the folksong collection was a twofold one - to introduce the Macedonians to their own ethnic cultural heritage, and to draw the attention of the learned world to the Macedonians. With this latter goal in mind, Konstantin Miladinov, who had studied in Russia on a Bulgarian scholarship and maintained close links with reputable Slavophiles in Vienna and Zagreb, played the Bulgarian card: the songs, originally written down in Greek letters, were "transliterated" into Cyrillic, and the Bulgarian folklorist Vasil Cholakov was paid 100 Forint for one hundred Bulgarian folksongs, the inclusion of which in the compendium made it possible to call it "Bulgarian Folksongs" in order to gain greater international attention. The title itself was camouflage - it is enough just to read the preface by Konstantin Miladinov, in which he states the origins of the songs and pays homage to their Macedonian character, to recognize this fact [2]. There is really no more to be said on this subject - anybody who would object to Konstantin Miladinov as being a "Bulgar" should refer to his poem "Yearning for the South" which is a veritable hymn to Macedonia ("Live me wings, not to stay! to our own land would I away! To our places would I go ! Ohrid to see and Struga to show"). But that is, as we have already agreed, a minor point by comparison with the three weightier shortcomings in Ninow's article: one ease of a lack of prudence, one of misinterpretation, and one of politically motivated arrogance (which, of course, is incorporated in the whole fragility of the Bulgarian position on Macedonia). But now, one thing at a time, please!

A "Self-Styled Nation"?

It is imprudent for Ninow to make a strict distinction between Pirin-Macedonia

(Bulgaria) and Vardar-Macedonia (Socialist Republic of Macedonia in Yugoslavia) and between their two populations and, on that basis, to accuse Yugoslavia in ever new variations of raising the most multifarious claims to Pirin. If, 'as Ninow writes, the Macedonians from the Pirin are Bulgars (and the annexation of the Pirin after the partitioning of Macedonia in the Balkan Wars of 1912/13 was an "act of national liberation"), and if on the other side of the border on the banks of the Vardar a "new nation" is created - a "self-styled nation" that has "no, roots" and which can lay claim to only a dubious "auto-genesis" - then that can only mean that all Macedonians are in reality Bulgars. Though Ninow does not say so that explicitly, he does imply it' for example in sentences such as the following: "The freedom fighters in Macedonia at the beginning of the century, the idea of a separate Macedonian nationality was (...) completely alien." And this is where the lack of prudence starts, for it was precisely by these freedom fighters that the idea of Macedonian autonomy was brought to its apotheosis[3]. The beginning of the century was not only the time of the Ilinden Uprising (August 1903), which was launched because of this ideal alone, but also the time in which Krste Petkov Misirkov (1879-1926) wrote, so to speak, the Magna Carta of this idea in his book On Macedonian Affairs. In it he wrote, for example:

"Our links with the Bulgars were very close because of our common predicament under Turkey: we were brothers in fate, and our relationships with the government and with the Phanariot clergy were the same. Our common fate also attached to us the common name of Bulgars (...). It is on this that the Bulgars based their claims to Macedonia, and the Macedonians lived in expectation of liberation from Bulgaria. But the rivalry for Bulgaria that arose in the political and national respects on the part of Serbia in the Macedonian Question also brought the Macedonians themselves onto the political scene. The Macedonians started to take a greater interest in the question of their nationality and their own fate (...). These are the results of our recognition of our own identity to date. The Organization, with its gradual separation of Macedonian interests from Bulgarian, with the taking of the Macedonian Question into our own hands, and with the present uprising there finally came to be what nobody had envisaged: instead of calling for freedom, most people in Macedonia are now convinced that we should completely break off our links with all Balkan peoples and must cultivate everything that is original and ours in Macedonia: the language, the customs, the history, the literature, ethnic activities, etc.[4]."

Fortunately, the Macedonians did not consummate the segregation from their Balkan neighbors recommended by Misirkov; instead, their national and their cultural consciousness and emancipation culminated in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. To negate the historical origins of this development, to typify its present-day character as mere "Bulgarophobia", to denounce its long-term effects as an "instrument of creeping expansion", and to see its international consequences as a possible "territorial conflict" between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, all things that Ninow does, is the continuation of the initial imprudence: for we could point out that what is perhaps more dangerous is a country that lays claim to the entire population of another as part of its own nation which Ninow only implies, but which is official Sofia policy. In the Bulgarian capital there appeared in 1978 - in Bulgarian and English-a voluminous compendium of "Documents and Material" on the Macedonian Question, which starts off with the following claims on Macedonia even in the foreword:

"... that the Slavic population in this region is Bulgarian, that the Bulgars in Macedonia are an indivisible component of the Bulgarian nationality in the Middle Ages and of the Bulgarian nation in more recent and contemporary times, that they think of and refer to themselves as Bulgars and, as such, are fighting for free-dom and independence., that they speak Bulgarian and regard their language as Bulgarian"[5]

The Yugoslav press did not report it, but it is said that in Titov Veles this book was publicly burned by enraged Macedonians.

But Ninow's imprudence goes even further - because he regards the Macedonians in Yugoslavia as a "new", artificial, and rootless nation, he can look back in a patronizing fashion on the few decades of Macedonian autonomy and surround its future in darkness. As long as he thinks so! In Macedonia itself, everybody is convinced that the Bulgarian position is becoming less and less credible day by day, for the Macedonian nation is emerging more and more and emanating stronger and stronger gravitational forces as each day passes. The Macedonian politician, Lazar Kolishevski formulated this in a speech as long ago as in 1973: "Naturally, the fact that we exist, that the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and the Macedonian nation are constantly evolving and consolidating in every Macedonian - regardless of where he lives - his feeling of belonging to his nation. This is a process that cannot be halted by anything"[6].

What really happened?

To turn now to the misinterpretation that Ninow presents of the course of development in the immediate post War period and the plans, etc., of the day. Admittedly, the Bulgarians are really to be pitied, because their earlier positions are so diametrically opposed to their later attitudes that today's Bulgarian publicists have no other recourse but to condemn everything said in the past as "a nihilistic line on our part"[7] and in doing so to have to come to terms with the fact that it was "Bulgaria's greatest son", Georgi Dimitrov, that determined Bulgaria's policies after the war. But rubbing that under the Bulgarians' noses is a pleasure frequently and with obvious enjoyment in Belgrade and Skopje. According to Ninow, what happened was that the official recognition for a time of a Macedonian minority in Bulgaria - and be it only in the form of "census Macedonians" - was the "result of the situation at the time" with a view to the peace treaty still to be concluded, that Yugoslavia "led Bulgaria astray" with all sorts of federation plans (while in fact "postponing the federation of the Southern Slavs ad calendas graecas"), that "Yugoslav emissaries" in the Pirin "interfered with cultural life and the education system with the intention of alienating the population of Bulgaria". But what really happened? Anybody who visits the church of the Holy Savior in Skopje, where the tomb of the Macedonian national hero, Gotse Delchev is to be found will hear eulogies to the Bulgar, Georgi Dimitrov, of no less than amazing cordiality and sincerity. In Bulgaria, towns named after Dimitrov have been renamed - Pernik was known as Dimitrovo from 1949 to 1962 - not so in Yugoslavia. And Vladimir Dedier - confidant of Tito and historiographer of the conflict between Tito and Stalin -had friendly words to say of only one Eastern European party leader: Dimitrov[8]. Any amount of evidence can be found for the sincere admiration that Georgi Dimitrov enjoys in Yugoslavia - as the Bulgarian politician who, for example, ensured that a "Resolution on the Macedonian Question" was unanimously passed at the 10th Plenary Session of the CC of the BCP on the 9th and 10th August, 1946, which included the articles:

1. The Bulgarian Workers' Party - Communists (the name of the BCP at that time, author's note), is of the opinion that the fundamental section of the Macedonian people has organized itself as a state and as a nation within the Federative People's Republic of Yugoslavia, namely as the People's Republic of Macedonia. The unification of the other sections of the Macedonian people will have to be implemented on the basis of the Macedonian People's Republic and within the FPR of Yugoslavia.

2. The BWP-C is of the opinion that the preparations for establishing the conditions for this unification and for the unification of the Pirin region with the PR of Macedonia is the affair of the Macedonians themselves and is the common task of Bulgaria and Yugoslavia[9].

On 17th August, 1946, this resolution, bearing Dimitrov's signature, was sent to Tito - together with a personal accompanying letter from Dimitrov to Tito: "In sending you this resolution, which for understandable reasons will not be published in the press, I would request you to bring it to the notice of our leading Macedonian comrades in Skopje..."[10] Thus culminated the policies of Bulgarian Communists who had up to that time always advocated Macedonian autonomy and disavowed "Greater Bulgarian chauvinism" - something which is no longer remembered in Bulgaria but is very much in the mind of Yugoslavs[11]. It is also still well known in Yugoslavia what great and manifold opportunities for autonomy the Pirin Macedonians enjoyed in Bulgaria after[12]; and how a tightknit network of Macedonian schools was set up in the Pirin, for the establishment of which Skopje was even requested to send Macedonian teachers[13]. The segregation of two problems after the war which Ninow claims occurred and for which he lays the blame on Yugoslavia - for putting Macedonian autonomy before a Southern Slav federation - is a fiction: Tito and Dimitrov, close personal friends, met in Bled in Yugoslavia (1st August, 1947) and in Evksinograd in Bulgaria (27th September, 1947) to reaffirm the cultural autonomy of the Pirin Macedonians. At the same time, they agreed to pursue the closest possible Yugoslav~Bulgarian co-operation with a view to future federation[14]. In the meantime, Pirin Macedonia exercised loyalty to all sides - its sympathies were with its neighbors and countrymen in Yugoslavia, but it continued to give political support to the ruling "Patriotic Front" in Bulgaria. The then Vice-President of the Yugoslav Parliament, Dimitar Vlahov, visited the Pirin in late 1947 and gave a very vivid report of what he saw there[15]. Basically, all that remained unclear were some procedural questions - but these carried weight: for example, whether the future confederation should be built up according to the 1 + 1 model (Bulgaria plus Yugoslavia) or to the 1 + 6 model (Bulgaria becoming the seventh Republic in the Yugoslav Federation). Before any clarification could be reached, however, a massive Soviet veto was delivered - on 28th January, 1948, Moscow's Pravda declared that the whole federation project was "dubious and artificial", and when the conflict between Stalin and Tito came along, it was all over anyway. For a while, Dimitrov stuck by his belief that the conflict was a matter between parties that need not have any negative repercussions on policies between states, but in the face of growing Soviet pressure Bulgaria gave in and cut off its relations with Yugoslavia¹⁶. As early as in July 1948, the CC of the BCP denied Yugoslavia all influence in Pirin Macedonia, but, interestingly enough, continued to uphold the principle of "the cultural autonomy of the Macedonian population of the Pirin region"[11].

A Proud Balance

And so things continued for over ten years - a fact that Ninow overlooks when

he quickly jumps from 1946 to 1965 and the period thereafter. Even in 1952, the BCP head of Pirin Macedonia was able to publish in the Bulgarian Party organ, *Rabotnicesko Delo* (Workers' Affairs) a proud balance of "what the people's authorities give the Macedonian population from the free Pirin land" - with constant side glances at Vardar Macedonia, where the "Tito-Kolishevski gang" was doing much less for the Macedonians[18]. And on 1st December, 1956, a new set of national statistics was drawn up for Bulgaria which identified among a total population of 7,613,709 persons 6,506,541 Bulgars, 187,789 Macedonians, and members of over a dozen other nationalities; these statistics were still published in the 1959 Bulgarian Statistical Yearbook[19]. Likewise in 1959, Bulgaria's leading historian, Dimitar Kosev, was able to publish a major essay which, though it contained massive polemics against his counterparts in Skopje, primarily lamented the failure of the Bulgarian-Yugoslav federation to materialize, which had appeared to him to be desirable especially in the interests of the Macedonians.[20] There is no more to be said on this subject - but no less, either, which is what Ninow attempts to do. It only remains to be asked why Bulgaria has performed such a radical about-turn that today it cannot bear to hear any more about the "Macedonians", least of all within its own borders. To answer this question is at the moment difficult to impossible, but it may be suspected that, between 1948 and 1959, Sofia intended to make the Pirin into such a "showcase" that the Yugoslav Macedonians, too, would tend towards Bulgaria, and that the powers-that-be then promptly "forgot" about the Macedonians when this plan turned out to be an illusion. But there is probably nobody who knows anything specific about this.

Political Arrogance

There remains to be discussed Ninow's politically motivated arrogance - that with which he treats the Macedonian language: he does this with fleeting elegance - without doubt more elegantly than other Bulgarian publicists, for whom Macedonian is merely an "externally imposed conglomeration of dialects and loan words"[21]. Ninow does not need such heavy artillery - for him, Macedonian is a "new language created in Skopje after the war" and which "despite the pertinacious infiltration of alien elements" is still Bulgarian in its basic structures and essential features. Let us leave aside the fireworks display of catch-phrases that Ninow sets off with the alleged demand by Yugoslavia that "Sofia must also recognize the Macedonian language". This demand does not exist, of course - what form should the "recognition" of a language by another state take nowadays, anyway? Enigmatic is the following sentence by Ninow: "Bulgarian tradition knows no urge to discriminate against the Macedonian language". This sentence is neither correct nor incorrect (that is possible, too!). Since pre-war Bulgaria regarded "Macedonia" only as a geographical term and did not even give any thought at all to the autonomy of the Macedonian nation or of the Macedonian language, it would have been difficult for it to discriminate against a "Macedonian" language: according to Bulgarian opinion at that time, Bulgarian was spoken in Macedonia, and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was accused of impeding the use of just that Bulgarian[22]. After the war, opinions were different in Sofia, but for years now, the old ideas have been back in force. In 1978 a linguistic collective work by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences that was also circulated in the German language came to the conclusion: "On its century long historical road, the Slavic population of the geographical region of Macedonia has been Bulgarian and has spoken Bulgarian"[23]. Is such an opinion on the part of an academic body "discrimination" or something else? In Skopje where they have a very good general view of the notable activities pursued in the field of Macedonian language studies in Poland, the Soviet Union,

the GDR and other countries of Eastern Europe, with the exception of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Academy's work was received with perfect composure: "There are good reasons to ask oneself whether one should pay any attention at all to such texts that are so distinctly geared towards the politics of the day". So they didn't instead, they took the opportunity of presenting the international academic public with a bouquet of examples of the independent existence of the Macedonian language over the centuries.[24]

The Macedonian Language

On this subject, Ninow is mistaken! The Macedonian language is neither "new", nor has it "emerged since the war"; nor is it semi-Bulgarian - although very closely related to Bulgarian. But how much does that count in the context of the Slavic languages - whose degree of mutual kinship is greater than that of the dialects of German, for example. Anybody who has attended an international conference in Eastern Europe knows how readily Slavs understand each other, even when each uses his own idiom. But that is not the problem. Ninow says himself that the "vernacular of the Slavs from Southern Macedonia" formed the protoplasm from which the Slavic Apostles, Cyril and Methodius launched their linguogenetic activities. In Skopje today, the general opinion is that this vernacular - that of the "Macedonian Slavs", as they were known in the official language of Byzantium - was, so to speak, the original proto-Macedonian, especially since the mother of Cyril and Methodius was one of those "Macedonian Slavs". It is a demonstrable fact, however, that the linguistic differentiation between Bulgarian and Macedonian began even with the disciples of the two apostles - with Angelari, Kliment and Naum: the first stayed in the old Bulgarian capital of Preslav, and the literary "school" demonstrated its Helenophilia by transcribing the Old Slavonic Glagolitic into the more practical Cyrillic alphabet; not so Kliment and Naum, whose field of action was the Macedonian Ohrid, which clung tenaciously to the Glagolitic alphabet until the 12th century. Lexical, stylistic and phonetic differences grew along side the graphic differences, because the "Ohrid Literary School" felt more committed to the traditions of Cyril and Methodius than did its sister in Preslav. And once started, this drifting apart continued during the period of Serbian mastery over Macedonia (13th to 14th centuries), with features such as vocalization to -o (instead of the Bulgarian a') becoming firmly established as typically characteristic of Macedonian, and in particular under the Turks (14th to 20th centuries), when the churches and monasteries were the last bastions of the national culture. From the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th century, we find in Macedonia - under the influence of certain authors such as Vladislav Gramatik, Dimitar Kratovski and others, but also of the popular books of the "Damaskines" and the beginnings of book-printing - a language that had already developed all the basic structures of present day Macedonian[25]. A new situation arose in the 19th century: more and more purely Macedonian books appeared (which from 1838 were published in a special Macedonian printing house in Salonica); secular schools of a Macedonian national character were founded in addition to the cell schools in the monasteries, Macedonian "reading halls" were established everywhere[26], and learned people developed a pronounced interest in the Macedonian cultural heritage - the Miladinov brothers have already been mentioned, but others such as Stefan Verkovich, Partenia Zografski, Kuzman Shapkarev and many more were also active at the same time. These effectively consummated the cultural and linguistic differentiation between Bulgarian and Macedonian, although that was by no means their intention: the clergyman, Partenia Zografski (1818-1876), for example, fought most energetically and deliberately for the autonomous Macedonian language

(for which he was one of the first to publish a textbook), but nevertheless endeavored to build up a Macedonian literary language on the basis of Bulgarian[27]. For the Bulgars were regarded not as enemies but as natural allies against the Turks and their Greek henchmen. In the second half of the 19th century, Macedonia was the only country that had not gained its independence from the Turks, and it was courted by the others with vigorous propaganda. This fact had a lasting effect on the cultural and linguistic scene, where four currents were vying with and against each other: Macedonian is essentially identical to Serbian, said some; Macedonian and Bulgarian are essentially the same, claimed others; while a third group around the poets Prlichev and Zhinzifov declared Macedonian to be a 'pan-Slavic conglomerate'. What was common to these three currents, however, was that all three took as their basis Macedonian, the language of their day-to-day life and their environs, and put it in first place; even Prlichev, who saw Macedonian as a hybrid artificial language proved with his children's poems in the Ohrid dialect that he was a master of that vernacular. This insistence on the pre-eminence of the Macedonian language, however, brought these three currents into the proximity of the fourth and most important, that of the "Macedonists" around Giorgi Pulevski, Krste' Misirkov and others, who were convinced of the absolute autonomy of the Macedonians and their language, which needed only to be rounded off by a formalized and literary language level. In Misirkov's "On Macedonian Affairs", we can read the following as regards the diagnosis and therapy thereof: "The danger threatening our people and 'our interests in the form of the propaganda that is being waged with all legitimate and illegitimate means in order to eradicate from Macedonia our language and our intellectual interests, in order to put in their place foreign languages and alien interests, (this danger) not only obliges us but also gives us every right to use all legitimate and illegitimate means to defend our people's language and with it our national interests. In doing so, we demand nothing alien but are protecting what is ours (...). The opportunity is now expedient for us to select as our common literary language the vernacular of Central Macedonia, that is to say that of Veles, Prilep, Bitola and Ohrid (...). Around this central vernacular we must now group all our academic and literary forces, to purify it and to enrich it with the treasures of the other Macedonian dialects, to make out of it a beautiful language of literature (...). The creation of a literary language is an intellectual necessity to us, with which we intend to put an end to the abuse of our interests by propaganda, with which we must create our own center of literature and science, so that we no longer have any need of Belgrade and Sofia. This difficult task will only be solved if the Macedonian from the North offers his hand to his brother from Southern Macedonia, and the Macedonian from Eastern Macedonia to his brother from the West. The handshakes cross at Prilep and Bitola"[28].

Prophetic words, for it was precisely in this way that the Macedonian language - the autonomous identity of which was explicitly noted by the Comintern in 1934 - continued its development, and the Second World War brought the handshake between all Macedonians predicted by Misirkov: the Macedonian partisans received their orders in Macedonian, published Macedonian newspapers and journals, wrote books and plays, and by the end of the war the clearly outlined foundations of a Macedonian literary language - based on the Central Macedonian dialects and with phonetic orthography - were ready to be built upon. When the leaders of the partisans proclaimed the Macedonian Republic from the monastery of Prohor Pchinski on 2nd August, 1944 and decreed "In the Macedonian State the official language is the national Macedonian language", they were basically only legitimating what the course of the war had already brought forth[29]. It is completely incomprehensible why Ninow should attribute

the foundation of the State of Macedonia to a "failure" on the part of the Yugoslav Communists. If communists ever and anywhere have been "successful", then it was in Yugoslavia, where they came to power without Soviet "assistance", where they had the majority of the people behind them, where they gave nations which had been treated cruelly by history, such as the Macedonians, a chance, and where they preserved land and peoples from joining the colorless ranks of Moscow's satellites! But that has nothing to do with the language, and it is the language with which we are now concerned. What this language "introduced" after the war was no more than that which it had not been possible to introduce earlier - an alphabet (to be more precise: a variant of the Cyrillic alphabet modified to reproduce the phonetic peculiarities of the Macedonian language), a standard orthography, and a binding grammar. Apart from these aids, what the Macedonian language now did was to develop its own inner life which up to then it had only been able to lead in secret. It differs from all other Slavonic languages in a number of significant peculiarities: its dynamic accent, permanently fixed on the antepenultimate syllable; the formation of accent units; almost complete loss of the phoneme "h"; enclitic definite article in three forms (knigata = the book, knigava = the book here, knigana = the book over there); composite tenses with "sum" (to be) and "imam" (to have); doubling of all direct object in a sentence (go vidam chovekot = I see him, the man); reflexive endings in front of the verb, and many more[30]. To reiterate: this is not a "new" language but a very old one that has awoken to a new life. It has survived for hundreds of years and, unless all appearances are deceptive, it lives on even in Bulgarian Pirin Macedonia. On this subject there appeared a comprehensive learned work in Sofia in 1980 that commendably dealt with the dialects spoken in the Pirin. And these reveal a truly amazingly large number of features that they share with the linguistic conventions of beyond the border in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia[31].

If one comes into contact with Macedonians today, for example at the Seminar on Macedonian Language, Literature and Culture which has been held regularly for 15 years (which is never attended by Bulgarians, but otherwise by practically the whole world), one can compress what one hears into this formula: In the beginning was the word, as it was spoken by Cyril and Methodius, Kliment and Naum; in the struggle for the word, centuries of alien mastery were survived; under the banner of the word and with its assistance the full Macedonian national life is only just beginning. A Question that does not exist The concept of "scientific objectivity" is even more of a fiction in the humanities and the social sciences than anywhere else - whoever writes in these passes judgment, and whoever passes judgment should admit to and stand by his judgment. I am pleased to admit that I have put (and am still putting) a lot of effort into learning the languages of the Bulgarians and the Macedonians and that I have come to know and cherish much affection for both of these peoples. For this reason, I allow myself a number of very personal observations as to how the "Macedonian Question" poses itself to the man in the street in Sofia or Skopje. The ongoing conflict over Macedonia obscures the fact that the Bulgarians and the Macedonians do not hate each other. If Macedonians are at all capable of feeling something like hate, then it is for the Greeks who have been holding the entire southern half of their country under foreign occupation since 1912 and there forcibly put down every stirring of Macedonian identity - including the use of the Macedonian language[32]. In this respect the present socialist government in Greece is even more radical by far than the Junta of Greek colonels were in the past: even as late as in 1982 Athens passed a law forbidding Greek citizens to study at universities abroad "at which the language in which instruction is given is not universally internationally recognized". This boils down to a "Lex Skopje"

intended to deprive the Macedonian minority in Greece - about 200,000 - of their last contact with Macedonian culture.[33]

As regards their northern neighbors, however, the Macedonians bear the Bulgarians hardly any resentment. They may joke about the Bulgars, but they respect them as an industrious people and think they cannot help acting as they do - because their political "big brother" is leading them by the hand. And the official Bulgarian negation of everything that is Macedonian has long ceased to be taken seriously in Skopje and its surroundings. Besides, the Bulgarians have been in the Macedonian capital's good books since 26th July, 1963, when Skopje was devastated by a fearful earthquake at the cost of over a thousand dead, 200,000 homeless, and the almost complete destruction of the city. Among the first to hurry to help were Bulgarian army units -they arrived in ramshackle trucks of Russian provenance, but the way they got stuck in and down to work has never been forgotten in Skopje! The Bulgarians for their part feel something bordering on admiration for Macedonian efficiency, economy, circumspection and shrewdness. If somebody makes a rapid and brilliant name for himself in Bulgaria he is generally assumed to be a Macedonian - and in most cases the assumption is correct. I have heard from people who ought to know that the former President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Todor Pavlov, used to shout at his staff at least once a week "You Bulgars! But look at us Macedonians!". At times I get the impression that the "Macedonian Question" in politics is a similar case to that of legasthenia in pedagogy - you have to go into it very closely to realize that it does not exist.

1 Cf „Makedonskia Vapros" (The Macedonian question) in: Makedonska Tribuna, No. 2614, 29th December, 1977, to No.2623, 2nd March 1978.

2 For details, Haralampie Polenakovich, Studies on the Miladinovs, Skopje 1973

3 For details, Jutta de Jong: „Der nationale Kern des makedonischen Problem - Ansätze und Grundlagen einer makedonischen Nationalbewegung (189~1903). Ein Beitrag zur komparativen Nationalismusforschung", Europäische Hochschulschriften, Series 3, Vol. 174, Frankfurt am Main/Bern 1982.

4. K. P. Misirkov, On Macedonian Affairs, Sofia 1903, `pp.70, 75.

5 Cf. Macedonia -A Compendium of Documents and Material, Sofia 1978, p.33.

6 Lazar Kollshevski, (Aspects of the Macedonian Question), Skopje 1980, pp.445 et seq.

7 Cf Yordan Graninain, (What do the facts say?) in: Pirinsko Delo No 93, 12th August, 1971, p. 4, No 94, 14th August, 1971, p.5.

8 Vladimir Dedijer, Stalins verlorene Schlacht - Erinnerungen 1948 bis 1953, Vienna~Frankfurt--Zurich 1970, pp.166 et seq.

9 Boro Mitrovski, Tomo Ristovski (G. D. on the Macedonian National Question and Yugoslav-Bulgarian Relations), Skopje, 1979, pp.102 et seq.

10 Id., pp.103 et seq.

- 11 Cf. Lazar Mojsov, (The BWP-C and the Macedonian National Question), Belgrade 1948, second edition in the Macedonian language, Skopje 1978.
- 12 Nikola Chingo, „The Macedonians in Bulgaria after the Fall of the Fascist Regime", in: Macedonian Review, No. 3/1977, pp. 273-28.
- 13 Misho Kitanovskl, „The Macedonian Schools in Pirin Macedonia", in: Macedonian Review No 2/1979, pp. 160~167.
- 14 Slobodan Nesovic, (The Tito-Dimitrov agreement of Bled), Zagreb 1979.
15. Dimitar Vlahov, (Impressions from Pirin Macedonia), in: Nova Makedonija, 31St December, 1947, p.
- 16 Hans-Joachim Hoppe, „Georgi Dimitrov - wieder aktuell", In: Osteuropa No 2/1974, pp.127-137.
- 17 Text of the resolution in Novo Vreme No.6-7/1948, pp. 512 et seq.
- 18 K. Trichkov, , What the people's authorities have given the Macedonian population from the free Pirin land, in. Rabotnicesko Delo , 3rd October, 1952. p.2.
- 19 Cf. (Statistical Yearbook of the People's Republic of Bulgaria), Sofia, 1959, p.28.
- 20 Dimitar Kosev, , (Revisionist falsifications of Bulgarian history by historians in Skopje), In: Istoricheski Pregled 1/1959, pp. 1-44.
21. Gradinajn, op. cit, part 2.
- 22 ~ Mladenov, Integral Yugoslavia from the language aspect, in: Rodna Rech, 1932-33, pp. 3-14.
- 23 Cf. „Edinstvo na bqlgarskia ezik v minaloto i dnes", in: Bqlgarski ezik No. 1/1978, pp. 33; cf. also the German translation: Die Einheit der bulgarischen Sprache ja yergangenheit und Gegenwart. Sofia, 1970, 70 pages.
- 24.Todor Dimitrovski, Blaze Koneski, Trajko Stamoski, On the Macedonian language, Skopje 1978, 95 pages.
25. For details refer to Mihailo Georgievski, The Macedonian Literary Heritage from the 11th to the 18th Centuries - A Review, Skopje, 1979.
- 26 For details refer to Mihailo Georgievski,. Monastery Libraries and Reading Halls in Macedonia up to 1912, Skopje 1975.
27. Tome Sazdov, Studies on Macedonian Popular Literature, Skopje, 1978, pp. 62 et seq.
28. Misirkov, op. cit., pp.137,138, 139, 141
- 29.Cf. Documents on the struggle of the Macedonian People" for Autonomy and their National State, Vol.11, Skopje, 1981, pp.555 et seq.

30. For details refer to Vera Bojic', Wolf Oschlies, Lehrbuch der mazedonischer Sprache, Bonn-Cologne, 1981, hect.

31. Hadzinikolov (ed.), Pirin Country - Ethnographic, Folklore and Linguistic Studies, Sofia, 1980, pp. 625 et seq.

32 Cf. Toso Popovsk, The Macedonian National Minority in Bulgaria, Greece and Albania, Skopje 1981, pp. 6-84, 191-23.

33 Dragan Jovanovic, Law Versus Diploma, in: NIN (Belgrade), No 1668, 19th December 1982, pp.17-18