

Jasna Bacovska *PhD*
Ognen Vangelov *Msc*

THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA IN THE NATIONAL AND STRATEGIC PROGRAMS OF THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

Summary

After the fall of the Berlin Wall the Balkan states entered a period of complex socio-political relations and even armed conflicts, the consequences of which are felt today. During this period many acts, programs, political documents, proclamations, memoranda, etc., have been created among which there are documents tackling certain historical, national and political issues, issued by academic institutions that are supposed to be relevant and respected.

After Macedonia's independence certain institutions from neighboring countries published texts raising questions about Macedonia's state, nation and language. In this context we can mention the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA) (Memorandum 1985), the Memorandum of the Macedonian Academic Institute in Sofia¹ (Memorandum, 1997), the publication entitled "The Skopje icon – Blazhe Koneski" (Dragnev, 1998), the Bulgarian national doctrine "Bulgaria in the 21st century"² by the Bulgarian National Center in 1998, the Platform on the Resolution of the Albanian National Question by the Albanian Academy of Sciences (AAS), and others.

¹ The Macedonian Academic Institute in Sofia was founded on December 20, 1923. It was closed in 1947, and was opened again on May 5, 1990. The Memorandum defines the Macedonian Academic Institute as the only center in Bulgaria studying the geographical area of Macedonia, and it also investigates the current issues in bilateral relations between Macedonia and Bulgaria.

² This national strategy attempts to determine the historical ground of the Bulgarian national interest, especially within Macedonia, as most of the platform tackles the problem of the "Macedonian Bulgarians". It also analyses the economical, political, cultural and military aspects of these national interests, and suggests to the Bulgarian state a strategy for its successful implementation.

Macedonia in the Platform on the Resolution of the Albanian National Question, by the Albanian Academy of Sciences, published in October 1998

In October 1998 the Albanian Academy of Sciences (AAS) published a "Platform on the Resolution of the Albanian National Question." This is the year when the hostilities in Kosovo escalated and the paramilitary organization, the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), began to operate. Interethnic relations were also deteriorating in Macedonia, especially regarding the use of Albanian national symbols, and the Tetovo University. There also were many protests that the Macedonian Albanians were organizing in support of the Kosovo Albanians. In the period of complex political circumstances that later turned into armed conflict, the AAS published a Platform on the Resolution of the Albanian National Question, seeking to offer solutions for the Albanian ethnic problems. The AAS also highlights the participation of intellectuals from Kosovo and Macedonia into the creation of this Platform.

The Platform notes the historical injustice to the Albanian nation and the historical right of the Albanians to live in one single state. Based on this premise, the chapter "The Road to Resolution" reads: "... Today we have an internationally established independent Albanian state. Its primary task is to keep the national issue open. This is certainly a positive circumstance. Yet, on the other hand, in order to fulfill this eminent program of renaissance, there ought to be a change of the borders of the four neighboring states, which also have been internationally established. This in turn is a negative circumstance, which, if we wish to be realistic, contains a difficult obstacle to overcome, and has no support in the international factor..." (Platform, 1998).

As a response, given that the Platform also refers to the Macedonian state and the status of the Albanians in it, the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MASA) prepared a Reference Regarding the Platform of the Albanian Academy of Sciences published in May 1999. Within this Reference MASA incorporated an Appeal for Peace, as meanwhile NATO launched its bombardments on FR Yugoslavia on March 24, 1999, bringing about exoduses, human victims and much suffering. In its Reference, MASA appealed for an abandonment of "greater states projects", particularly having in mind that such projects were being raised by academics whose primary task is determining the truth by applying the highest professional ethics and virtues. The Reference reads as follows: "Establishing that more than half of the Macedonian territory has been an Albanian ethnic space for millennia cannot be understood by any historian dealing with the Balkans and the ethnic origins of the peoples living there. Therefore, in our view it is evident that the positions presented in the Platform openly lay claims on Macedonian territories. Each approach in the Platform makes such claims apparent"(Reference, MASA, 1999:11).

The publishing of this Platform has been motivated by the events in Kosovo at the time and it discusses the future not only of the Kosovo Albanians but of the Albanian nation as a whole, i.e. "the destiny of the Albanian ethnic space", which, according to the Platform, suffers under

Serbian occupation. This is indeed the case with the Kosovo Province where Albanians form 90% of the total population as well as in the regions inhabited by Albanians in Macedonia, Montenegro and Greece. Consequently, the Platform tackles the national interests of Macedonia.

The Platform a priori rejects the idea for an undefined autonomy of Kosovo within Serbia or FR Yugoslavia, as an idea given by the international factor. As such an option was unacceptable to them as it would mean a resolution to the status of Kosovo and not a resolution of the national question as a whole. Hence, it appears that the territorial disunity is the main issue for the Albanian intellectuals and its main goal is the redrawing of borders in the Balkans in order to create a united, mono-ethnic Albanian state. The right to such a state has been searched for in the history. Therefore, the greatest Albanian intellectuals are writing a history lesson in this Platform intended for their neighbors. Namely, according to them Albania has been partitioned in 1867 by a secret alliance between Serbia and Greece concluded in Wslau, Austria.

The Albanians consider themselves direct successors of the ancient Illyrians, and in order to prove their presence on all of the aforementioned territories they cite some international scholars³, according to which Albanians have been present as an indigenous population to the north (Nish, Leskovac, Vranje in Serbia), to the east (Kumanovo, Prilep, Bitola in Macedonia) and to the south (Konjica, Janina, Preveza in Greece). Furthermore, during the Ottoman Empire, these regions have been divided into four vilayets: Kosovo, Skadar, Bitola, and Janina. The largest one is the Kosovo Vilayet with its capital Skopje.

The Platform incorporates parts of Macedonia (Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Kumanovo, Debar and Struga regions) within the territorial unit of Kosovo. This suggests that when the Platform talks about Kosovo, it means the Kosovo area during the times of the Ottomans was inhabited exclusively by Albanians. It appears that the creators of the platform firmly hold onto this idea for the Kosovo territory, which is also taken as a basis for political activism today. Much of the Macedonian territory has been designated with the term “historical Kosovo”. In its response MASA points out that the Albanian historians must know why the Sultan had created such administrative divisions and when Skopje had become the seat of the Vilayet. Also, it points out that Albanian population in Nish, Leskovac, Vranje, Kumanovo, Prilep, Bitola, Lerin and Kostur had never been a significant number. The Kosovo Vilayet had not been populated “largely by Albanian population”, and consequently Skopje had never been mentioned as a “primary center” of some “historical Kosovo”. Such claims and theses, the Reference says, do not contribute to a serious dialogue. Furthermore, it highlights that such ethnic heterogeneous administrative units were created as a result of the Ottoman Empire’s political needs at the time of its decline, but unfortunately the Albanian Platform ignores this historical fact.

The Albanian intellectuals also criticize the Greek “Megali Idea” and the Serbian “Nachertania” – both an aspiration to enlarge the existing states. Such aspirations have no serious historical ground and

³ Ami Buje 1840, E. Spencer 1847, Hanh 1853

they are an extension to the political ideas for greater states. In the Albanian case, such an idea is justified by the fact that there are Albanians living outside of the borders of Albania.

Albanians believe that they have protected the orthodox churches in Kosovo during the Ottoman Empire. They also believe that due to their uprisings the Empire had been declining. However, the historical truth is contrary to such claims. Thanks to the mass islamization of the Albanians during the Ottoman Empire, their feudal ranks had participated in the rise of the Ottoman Empire where they took leading positions. In the second half of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century these leaders greatly contributed to the suffering of the Macedonian population. Namely, the local Ottoman Albanian leaders were at war with each other for prestige. Concurrently there were Albanian outcasts who increased the terror over the Macedonian population, points out MASA's Reference in its critical analysis of the Platform.

According to the platform, after the Albanians "had weakened" the Ottoman Empire and "had encouraged" the Balkan monarchies to start a common war against the Ottoman Empire, on November 28th 1912, the delegates of all "Albanian" regions proclaimed the national independence of Albania in Valona, including all of the ethnic Albanian areas.

The Albanian academicians condemn the Great Powers as they only recognized the Independence Act at the London Conference in 1913, while they refused to recognize the second Act of Valona that incorporated the Albanian ethnic areas into the state, i.e. according to this claim; half of Albania had been partitioned among Serbia, Greece and Montenegro. Also, the Platform insists, during the WWI and WWII this injustice had not been redressed and Albania continued to be partitioned between the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Greece, even if it had been on the winning side in both wars.

According to the Platform, during the WWII Hitler did not grant Kosovo to Albania, but to Italy, which then granted these territories to Albania only under administrative rule, i.e. out of the six prefectures that had belonged to the "historical Kosovo", only four were united with Albania: the prefectures of Pristina, Pec, Prizren and Tetovo. Even though these territories were, according to this Platform, only under administrative rule, Albanians began to enjoy their full ethnic rights and freedoms, which, in other words, is a praise of Hitler's solution.

Furthermore, the Platform claims that Albania has an important contribution to the defeat of the fascist Italian-German bloc and that around 70,000 partisans were active in Albania, and 50,000 in Kosovo. The total number of war casualties was estimated to 28,000 Albanians. Hence, the Platform emphasizes that Albania had been unjustly accused by Greece as a collaborator of the occupiers at the Peace Conference in Paris in 1946. MASA's Reference responds that the annexation of western Macedonia by Albania during the fascist occupation can in no way be treated as a positive historical event. The Macedonian academicians raise the question: "Is this ethnic Albania"? Have Albanian academicians forgotten that Macedonian partisans, together with the Albanian partisans, fought a war for three years against the Albanian pro-fascist police, the Albanian Balist paramilitaries and the other fascist

formations of Albanians? Macedonians gave the greatest victims during those battles, especially in 1944. The Macedonian people remembers this period as a period of fascist terror in that part of Macedonia, when yet another exodus of the Macedonians occurred... The Macedonian towns of Skopje, Prilep, Bitola, Kicevo, and Kumanovo could have in no way relied to an Albanian self-determination..." (Reference, MASA, 1999:16).

Albanians are also greatly disappointed by the Titoist regime as, despite the fact that at the Bujan Conference in 1944 the Albanian, Serbian and Montenegrin communists had agreed that the principle of self-determination should have applied in the creation of the new state, Albanians were again denied the right to create their own republic. According to the Platform's "academic" reasoning, Albanians have been living in "historical Kosovo" for thousands of years having a common territory, culture and population which in number is the third after the Serbs and the Croats. Hence, the Platform claims that after WWII the Albanian nation had been partitioned for the third time (the first two being after the Berlin Congress in 1878 and the Ambassador's Conference in 1913) as "historical Kosovo" had been partitioned by the republics of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia. Consequently, the Platform concludes that Macedonia had annexed the southern part of Kosovo (the regions of Skopje, Tetovo, Gostivar, Kicevo, Kumanovo, Debar and Struga). In such a circumstance, the Albanian nation is portrayed as an innocent nation that has been morally and politically underprivileged. The Albanian academicians, but also some Albanian intellectuals from Macedonia who have participated in the creation of the Platform in the chapter "The Further Partitioning of the Ethnic Space", claim: "The annexation of the southern part of historical Kosovo by Macedonia where Albanians present a majority even today is an illegitimate act... In fact this is neither Serbian, nor Macedonian land as the population in southern Serbia and in northern Macedonia is Albanian – therefore it is Albanian land" (Platform, 1998). Albanians hence are presented as victims of the aggressive Slavic nationalism and communist dictatorship, deprived of all national rights (such as education, mother tongue, etc.).

Albanians in Macedonia, according to many researches, often draw a parallel between their position in Macedonia and the position of the Albanians in Kosovo; hence the most common forms of resistance by the Albanians in Macedonia resemble those of the Kosovo Albanians. In this context, it is interesting to observe the genesis of the Kosovo problem through the prism of the Albanian Academy of Sciences.

The creation of the Kosovo Province with the Constitution of 1953 is seen as another partition of Kosovo, as the regions of Bujanovac, Preshevo and Medvedja were artificially separated from it. The autonomy is seen as a measure to destroy the Albanian resistance. The demonstrations of Albanians in 1968, according to the Platform, are a response to the grave position of the Albanians, i.e. as an outrage to the denial of Kosovars to gain the right of a republic within the federation.

As for the Constitution of 1974, the Platform seems to express satisfaction that Kosovo had become a constituent part of the Yugoslav federation, with its own Constitution, Assembly, Constitutional Court, executive bodies and representatives in the Yugoslav Presidency;

however it emphasizes that Albanian aspirations had not been fully met – Kosovars did not gain the right to have a republic and were culturally and economically discriminated against within the federation, being second-class citizens. The revived Albanian demonstrations in 1981 in Kosovo are evaluated by the Platform as a further weakening of the federation and an expression of Albanian dissatisfaction.

The chapter “Proclamation of the Republic of Kosovo” qualifies the declaration of independence as a justified and legitimate act of Albanian representatives in Kachanik on September 7, 1990 (the Yugoslav federation had not yet dissolved). The representatives proclaimed the Republic of Kosovo as a constituent part of the Yugoslav federation, they enacted a Constitution and they claimed to have fulfilled the demands of the 1968 and 1981 demonstrations, as well as the Referendum held on September 30, 1991 demanding a full independence for Kosovo. Albanian intellectuals believe that they had acquired the right to gain a recognition of the Republic given their contribution to the dissolution of the SFRY.

The Albanian intellectuals, however, are dissatisfied with the international treatment of the problem, i.e. with the Minister’s Council decision from December 16, 1991 which established the principles for the resolution of the problems arising from SFRY’s dissolution (also known as the “Badinter Principles”). These principles set out that only the republics of the former state shall be recognized as independent states, whereas no change of borders among republics shall be recognized. After the independence the republics shall continue to respect the rights of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities within their respective borders, in accordance with the principles of international law. Based on this, the Peace Conference under the leadership of Lord Carrington did not recognize Kosovo’s independence. As a result, the patience of Albanians was coming to an end and they were ready, as never before, to take up weapons and fight for Kosovo’s independence. The Platform justifies the necessity of the military aspirations of the Albanian people. It appears that an academic institution of the highest rank, respected by state factors, supported military incursions in the dawn of the century.

In the part of the Platform entitled “The Question of Albanians in Macedonia”, the AAS completely discredits Macedonia, naming it a “porous state”, and adding that **“international military deployments stationed in the Albanian ethnic space attempt to serve as a pillar to the Macedonian collapsing building” (Platform, 1998)**. The Platform again claims that the Albanian ethnic space in Macedonia has a territorial continuity. Otherwise, the concept of “ethnic” Albania is supported by the Albanians who do not wish to be seen as expansionists, creating an image that the Albanian demands are natural and logical, as opposed to the term “greater Albania” that gives an expansionist connotation to such claims (Gilles de Rapper, 1998)⁴. Furthermore, the platform continues

⁴ Gilles de Rapper (a French anthropologist) is the author of a small study entitled “The Crisis in Kosovo and the Reactions in Macedonia and Albania at a local level” had studied the transformation of the Albanian society and collective identities (national, regional and religious) of Albanians in Albania and in Macedonia in a period of four years. In March and April 1998, he spent six weeks in Macedonia and Albania analyzing

with its groundless accusations that the Macedonian authorities have allegedly refused to publicize the exact number of Albanians living in the country, as according to Macedonia's official statistics Albanians were 23% of the total population. According to the Platform, the Albanian population in Macedonia stands at 35%, while the Macedonians were only 55% of the total population, including those who consider themselves Bulgarian. The rest of the population, the Platform indicates, were Serbs, Roma, Turks and others. Contrary to this, MASA as points out on the five consecutive censuses in Macedonia following the WWII, carried out in accordance with international standards and methodologies. Thus, according to the first official census in 1953, there were 162,524 Albanians in Macedonia, or 12.5% of the total population, while according to the 1994 census carried out under international monitoring, there were 484,228 Albanians in Macedonia, or 23% of the total population, and 1,401,389 Macedonians, or 66%. According to this data, the Macedonian state had not acted restrictively or discriminatorily toward the Albanian birth rate, as the ratio between the Macedonian and the Albanian population in 1953 had been 6:1, while in 1994 it was 3:1. Contrary to this, the Albanian state statistics do not show the exact number of the Macedonian population in Albania, and according to MASA, there are around 120,000 Macedonians in Albania (both Christian and Moslem).

The platform also claims that Albanians in Macedonia are discriminated against and are second-rank citizens; that they are not equitably represented in state bodies and in political life; that they are victims of police violence and that the crisis in Macedonia would not be overcome until Albanian national rights are recognized. The Platform forecasts that within a few years the Albanian population in Macedonia would reach the percentage of Macedonians or would exceed it (what kind of measures would be employed to achieve this, remains to be seen). Hence, Albanian academicians and intellectuals propose two alternatives as a solution of the internal crisis in Macedonia, which, according to them, is a result of the violation of Albanian ethnic rights. The alternatives are: either Albanians would be treated as equal citizens and have a shared sovereignty with the Macedonians taking the example of the Austria-Hungarian monarchy, or Albanians in Macedonia should acquire a right of an autonomous unit within Macedonia. As a response to the first alternative (organizing Macedonia following Austria-Hungary's example of 1867), MASA says: "Macedonia cannot be a state taking the example of Austria-Hungary of 1867. Hungary was not a territory of a minority within Austria until 1867, but a nation with its own history, old statehood, own language and own affirmed culture. Albanians in Macedonia are, however, a minority that has a kin state outside of the borders of the Republic of Macedonia" (Reference, 1999:18).

The reference furthermore rejects the second alternative (an autonomy of Albanians within Macedonia) as this option carries the tendency for secession. The thesis concerning the "union of all Albanian ethnic areas into a mono-ethnic state" is not possible, as much as it is not

possible to seek a mono-ethnic state for all Macedonians, the Reference concludes.

In its Appeal for Peace, MASA reads: “There is no doubt that the Balkan peoples have many common characteristics in their cultures, customs, sensibilities, folklore and languages. These common features are present in their traditional music, architecture, folk creations, mentality, literacy, etc. As a result of their common life throughout centuries, living in similar historical, economic, social and cultural conditions, the Balkan peoples have more things in common than things that divide them. Therefore, it is inevitable that they start to build their future upon a radically new Balkan strategy that would not point out the differences by drawing new borders, but would instead highlight the deep and all-encompassing economic, political and spiritual links among these peoples. Such a strategy should lead to a thoroughly new consciousness that would exclude the old tragic misunderstandings, and should be focused on the construction of our common Balkan future, whose importance in Europe is multifaceted both in a geopolitical and cultural sense” (Reference, 1999:37).

The Republic Of Macedonia In The National And Strategic Programs Of The Republic Of Bulgaria

By applying a subtle and thorough analysis, it becomes evident that there is a tradition of, more or less, visible tensions in the relations between Macedonia and Bulgaria. The problems in good-neighborly relations are not related to unsolved economic, military or territorial issues, which are the most common reasons for unfavorable bilateral relations between neighboring countries. The essential problem in the communication between the two countries has an ideological nature. Namely, it arises from the promotion of the anti-Macedonian propaganda through anti-Macedonian interpretations of historical events and documents. This mostly comes from certain centers and organizations, which wish to portray themselves as “scientific” institutions. Even if these institutions are in the sphere of the civil society, they use their critiques and communiqués to address the official authorities of Macedonia, simultaneously appealing to the Bulgarian government to engage in the protection of the “Bulgarian” interests in Macedonia. Last but not least, it must be emphasized that often such campaign is actively supported by individuals who take up leading and influential roles of public interest in Bulgaria.⁵

Given the above reasons, this paper presents an analysis of two important publications of the Macedonian Scientific Institute in Sofia⁶, and the Bulgarian National Center for Scientific Strategy. The former is

⁵ For example, this is the case with Prof. Bozhidar Dimitrov, Director of the National-Historical Museum of Bulgaria, who, as a proven anti-Macedonian, has been actively involved in the preparation, interpretation and promotion of various documents against the Macedonian individuality.

⁶ The Macedonian Scientific Institute in Sofia was first founded on December 20, 1923. It was closed in 1947 and then reestablished on May 5, 1990.

the Memorandum⁷ (hereinafter: Memorandum) on the Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia by the Macedonian Scientific Institute, which was published in relation to the language dispute between the two countries. The latter is the National Strategic Program “Bulgaria in the XXIst Century”⁸ by the Bulgarian National Center for National Strategy (hereinafter: National Strategic Program), which offers linguistic, demographic, geographic and historical “arguments” in its denial of the Macedonian nation. The comparative approach in this analysis reveals a common ideological background and an exceptional anti-Macedonian attitude in both documents.

The objective of this paper is to offer information on the thematic foundation of the aforementioned documents, without thereby offering counter-argumentation.

I. Motivation for the publication of the Memorandum and the National Strategic Program

The Memorandum of the Macedonian Scientific Institute of 1997 concerns about what it believes to be acute and current problems in the relations between Macedonia and Bulgaria. In that respect, the Institute determines itself as a sole center dealing with scientific issues of the geographic region of Macedonia and reviews the current issues in bilateral relations between the two countries.⁹ The acute problems, which, according to the Memorandum, represent an obstacle for the good-neighborly relations between Macedonia and Bulgaria, are reduced to the allegedly problematic questions about the character of the Macedonian state, the essence of the Macedonian nation and the existence of the Macedonian language. Therefore (as will see further below) it offers comprehensive argumentation, i.e. evidence supporting the “scientific” thought of the Institute. The argumentation, however, relates mostly to the linguistic dispute, which is cited as a primary motive for the creation of the Memorandum.

Following the same line of thought, the Bulgarian National Center for Scientific Strategy prepared a National Strategic Program in 1998, under the motto “protection and spiritual unification of Bulgarians in the world”. This national strategy attempts to determine the historical base of the Bulgarian national interest,¹⁰ to analyze the economic, political, cultural and military aspects of such national interests, and to back the

⁷ The Memorandum has been adopted on July 7, 1997.

⁸ The National Strategic Platform was adopted in September 1998 under the motto “protection and spiritual unification of the Bulgarians in the world”.

⁹ The ideological line of argumentation in this documents, which we shall analyze in more detail later, can be clearly seen already in the introduction. Namely, the Republic of Macedonia is immediately designated as “only one third of the region”.

¹⁰ This mostly refers to the Bulgarian national interest in the Republic of Macedonia, as most of the Platform has been dedicated to the problem of the “Macedonian Bulgarians”. This is the point where both the Memorandum and the National Strategic Platform take an equal stance in their ideological and practical orientation.

strategy of the Bulgarian state for a successful implementation of such national interest.

The Program is developed by prominent scholars and university professors, i.e. the elite of the Bulgarian scientific life, highly esteemed by the Bulgarian state and political factors. The foreword of the Program suggests that the proposed national strategic programs do not aspire to be a unique idea and a possibility without alternatives. On the contrary, it indicates that the proposal is one of the possible alternatives for the implementation of such interest, which, according to the authors, ought to be carried out by the Bulgarian authorities.

According to the Program, the primary motive for the publication of such a strategic program is the presence of a significant number of Bulgarians outside of Bulgaria's borders. Most of all, this refers to the Bulgarians inhabiting, according to the Program, the "Bulgarian ethnic territories annexed by her neighbors". Furthermore, the program also mentions the Bulgarian emigration, which occurred as a result of historical, political, economic and other reasons.

Important motives, according to this Program, are the denationalization and the assimilation of the Bulgarians outside Bulgaria, their limited political rights, their economic stagnation and their general regress. Many of them have preserved their national consciousness and maintain their links with their kin state, organize national associations and clubs, or unite through religious communities. Hence, not only do they need spiritual support, but also financial. In essence, these are the most important motives underlined in the Program as the incentives for its creation.

II. Ideological orientation of the Memorandum and the National Strategic Program (fundamental problems in the relations between Macedonia and Bulgaria)

The ideological basis in both documents, which further inspires and calls on an appropriate political reaction and mobilization, is the complete denial of the Macedonian nation and the Macedonian language, as well as caricaturing the Macedonian history. Thus, for instance, the authors base the National Strategic Platform upon an aprioristically founded historical thesis saying that Macedonia is in fact a result of the falsified Bulgarian history, while the Macedonian nation and its language are creations of the Yugoslav Communist Party. As a result of such fundamental premises, the orientation that dominates the analyzed texts draws a parallel between the Macedonian nation and its language, with the Bulgarian nation and the Bulgarian language. This line of thought is a further development of the already well-established Bulgarian thesis for one Bulgarian nation in two states – Macedonia and Bulgaria (concisely: "one people, two states!").

In this context we shall attempt to demystify the dominant anti-Macedonian ideological schemes in both documents through

concentrating on their argumentation, primarily related to the question of the state, the nation and the language.

(1) The question of the state

With regard to the question of the state in its Memorandum, the Macedonian Scientific Institute cites the practice already established in international law through the centuries that only states and governments are recognized, while groups cannot be subjected to recognition. It is a precedent in the international law to have national groups, ethnicities or national languages be recognized as such. This, according to the Memorandum, is supported by international practice according to which international treaties may be concluded in languages other than the languages of the signatories.

Bulgaria has been characterized as the friendliest neighbor of Macedonia, for the fact that it was the first to recognize Macedonia's independence after the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991. Furthermore, according to this Memorandum, Bulgaria has saved the Macedonian economy which was endangered by the economic embargo from the south and from the north¹¹, i.e. Bulgaria, without bilaterally signed treaties, had been the only "window" toward the world for the Macedonian economy. Finally, Bulgaria did not agree with the partition of Macedonia, as proposed then by Greece.

Similarly, according to the National Strategic Platform, the Bulgarian Government had undertaken a bold and a nationally responsible act of recognizing Macedonia, yet only as a territory with its state's sovereignty. On the other hand, the Macedonian governments that have been in power up to 1998 are accused of perpetuating the confrontational policies toward Bulgaria. More precisely, according to the Memorandum, the Macedonian governments had posed the baseless condition for the recognition of the Macedonian people and language in order to establish bilateral relations with Bulgaria, thus posing territorial claims not only to Greece, but to Bulgaria as well.

Bulgaria's good intentions related to the recognition of Macedonia's independence have also been highlighted by the fact that modern Bulgaria does not have territorial claims toward Macedonia, as opposed to the fact that Macedonia allegedly does. This is claimed despite the eye-piercing thesis of the National Strategic Platform that the Bulgarian ethnic territory includes the whole territory of Macedonia, i.e. the borders of the Bulgarian ethnic territory correspond with those established by:

- The Sultan Code of 1870 for the establishment of an independent Bulgarian Orthodox Church and an Exarchate;

¹¹ The Republic of Macedonia faced a particularly difficult blockade by the Republic of Greece. On the other hand, as a result of the military conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia, Serbia was under an international embargo. The double blockade of Macedonia had an exceptionally difficult impact on its foreign trade and on its national economy.

- The Plebiscite held in Macedonia's Eparchies: Skopje, Ohrid, Kukush and Salonika. As a result of the Plebiscite, these Eparchies have been included under the jurisdiction of Bulgarian Orthodox Church in 1872;
- The Resolution of the Constantinople Conference of the Great Powers and Bulgaria, held in 1876;
- The San-Stefano Peace Treaty of 1878, signed by Russia and the Ottoman Empire without the participation of Bulgarian representatives.

(2) The question of the nation

The second question that has been defined as problematic in the bilateral relations between Macedonia and Bulgaria is the question of the nation. The Memorandum of the Macedonian Scientific Institute states that the Bulgarian nation in Vardar Macedonia and in Aegean Macedonia has been under Serbian and Greek occupation respectively, and that it is under pressure of denationalization. According to this Memorandum, only uneducated politicians and journalists from both sides of the Ograzhden Mountain draw a parallel between the nation and the state, without taking into account that the state as a political category has a temporary character, such as the USSR, the SFRY, or the Austria-Hungarian Empire. The nation as an ethnic category has a longer-term character. The attempt to create a Macedonian nation is as ludicrous as the attempts to create a Yugoslav, a Soviet, or an Eastern-German nation.

On the other hand, the National Strategic Platform declares that the population in Macedonia until 1944 had always expressed its loyalty to the Bulgarian nation, and this fact had been well known to the world academic and political public. In 1945, the Platform claims, the People's Republic of Macedonia was created within Yugoslavia, based upon anti-Bulgarian Macedonism. In the period between 1913 and 1941, Serbian authorities in Macedonia had killed over 35,000 Bulgarians, and more than 680,000 were forced to migrate mostly into Bulgaria. According to Bulgarian historical evidence and sources, after 1944 more than 24,000 Bulgarians had been killed without trials, and over 140,000 had been sent to concentration camps and prisons. Furthermore, according to the newest Bulgarian research, this number has raised of up to over 300,000 Bulgarians, most often members of the IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization). Despite those facts, the Bulgarian strategists claim that most of the Macedonian Bulgarians have been openly declaring their ethnic affiliation toward the Bulgarian nation.

According to the Bulgarian academic reasoning, the Bulgarians in Macedonia are citizens whose political rights have been severely reduced. This claim is based on the fact that according to the Constitution of Macedonia, the complete Slavic population in Macedonia is treated as Macedonian, and officially only 1850 citizens have been recognized as Bulgarians. Accordingly, the Program claims that the Slavic population in Macedonia has been deprived of its innate right to self-determination.

In support of the aforementioned claims, the Program contends that there are around 1,400,000 citizens of Macedonia with Bulgarian ethnic roots, without the right to self-determination. Still, it is claimed furthermore, that the majority of the population considers itself Bulgarian, despite the fact that officially they are hostages of the Macedonianism and forced to register and declare themselves as “Macedonians”. Moreover, the younger generations have a twisted national consciousness as a result of the denationalizing policies lasting over 50 years.

2.1. The problems with the emigration

Following the same line of thought tackled above, the denial of the Macedonian nation continues with the focus and the denial of the ethnic affiliation of the Macedonian diaspora. Namely, the whole Macedonian diaspora is claimed to be Bulgarian. The Chapter “The Bulgarians in Australia and America” in the Bulgarian National Strategy notes that there are 160,000 Bulgarians in the USA, 150,000 in Canada, 38,430 in Central and South America, and 110,150 in Australia and Oceania. It is emphasized that these numbers refer to emigrants from Bulgarian lands outside the borders of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Furthermore, the Bulgarians emigrating from Bulgaria and the historical Macedonia are divided into “old” and “new” emigration. According to this theory, the “old” emigration is the one which had emigrated before the WWII. The “new” emigration is the emigration from Macedonia, occurring after 1950s. It is highlighted that the latter is a product of the Skopje’s communist school and “pro-Macedonian” by affiliation. Thus, the conclusion is that there is a great difference in the attitudes toward Bulgaria between the “old” and the “new” emigration. At the same time, the church has also been divided, and the language of the new immigrants contains many Serbianisms.

Within the Bulgarian emigration, two organizations with Bulgarian orientation are highlighted, which, according to this line of thought, have the greatest role in the activism of the Bulgarian lobby, and these are:

1. The Bulgarian National Front
2. The Macedonian Patriotic Organization (MPO).

The principal difference between the two is that the Bulgarian National Front has members from Bulgaria proper, whereas MPO has members from all of the regions of Macedonia.

MPO was founded in 1922 and it is regionally divided. Its members belong to several generations, usually three or four, mostly with Macedonian origin. Its leader had been Vancho Mihajlov for many years. Many of the members are bearers of various political ideas which, at a certain point, had been current for the resolution of the Macedonian question (for instance, the idea for a free and independent Macedonia with its capital Salonika; the idea for the unification of all Macedonian lands and their incorporation into the Bulgarian state; or the idea for the independence of the Republic of Macedonia, etc.).

It is believed that MPO has been the main actor for the preservation of the Bulgarian spirit in Macedonia until the beginning of the 1990s. However, in the 1990s MPO has been struck by an ideological crisis. The critical year is believed to be 1991, when the Republic of Macedonia acquired its independence, for which secret Yugoslav services are blamed, as well as the Greek propaganda. This is a period when MPO was led by individuals with origin from Aegean Macedonia, but born in America, who do not speak Bulgarian and who do not hold the qualities of MPO's previous leaders. These are individuals who have completely lost their direct connections with Macedonia who are not aware of the Macedonia's specific conditions, while some have been influenced by Macedonian services and police. As a result, the journal "Macedonian Tribune" begins to come out in English, some of the editorials no longer occur, and excerpts of American press are given without commentaries. In fact, according to this line of thought, the ideological crisis has reached such proportions that MPO has forbade memberships to individuals accused of extreme Bulgarian nationalism, without the consent of the Central Committee of the MPO.

This situation was not accepted by the Organization's members and thus during the 76th Congress in 1996 the then leadership had been ousted and replaced with individuals who originate from Vardar Macedonia, but speak the Bulgarian language. As a result of their endeavors, the ties with Macedonia had been reestablished and MPO had come back to its previous position. The fundamental conclusion is that MPO today is a respected organization by the Macedonian official representatives.

(3) The question of the language

The third problem, which, according to the Macedonian Scientific Institute of Sofia, is a key problem, is perhaps the most important stumbling block in the Bulgarian-Macedonian relations. This is the language issue. The introductory claim is that linking the language to the state creates a comic absurd. In this context, Macedonian language would mean the same thing as a "Swiss" language, "Luxembourgish" language, "Belgian" language, "Mexican" language, etc. The Institute contends that the "Macedonian" language has: 1. A millennium long Bulgarian tradition; 2. Bulgarian dialects; 3. Bulgarian written form which had been restructured after the WWII, i.e. it is a restructured Bulgarian literary language which had been under severe Serbian lexical influence and grammatical dialectization. The conclusion is: there is no Macedonian language.

The denial of the Macedonian language is being supported by the artificial interpretation of its origin. Namely, both documents claim that the Macedonian language first appeared during the WWII. Historical documents cited in favor of such a claim date from the medieval times. The Memorandum names Macedonia as a cradle of the Bulgarian and Slavic literacy (IX century). Furthermore, it is pointed out that Macedonia, as a cradle of Bulgarian Renaissance, had given its contribution to the construction of the Bulgarian nation through the

deeds of Yoakim Krchovski, Kiril Pejchinovikj, Teodosij Sinaitski, Nikola Rilski, and the Miladinovi Brothers.

The historical argumentation continues with the statement saying that the Bulgarian language until 1913 had been the official language in schools, literature and print media on the whole territory of Macedonia. The Memorandum also claims that even today in Vardar Macedonia, there is the “Skopje norm”, i.e. the Macedonian language has not been stabilized and that there is a linguistic chaos.

Finally, the denial of the individuality of the Macedonian language is being supported by the claim that the Bulgarian language had been the mother tongue of several important Macedonian revolutionaries. So, it is claimed that all of the ideologists of the Revolution, such as Goce Delchev, Dame Gruev, Hristo Tatarchev and others had used the Bulgarian literary language. The claims go so far as contending that even Kocho Racin, a Macedonian poet, had been killed in a partisan concentration camp due to the fact that he wrote in Bulgarian literary language.

The aforementioned argumentation is an introduction to explaining the “real” genesis of the Macedonian language, which finally is determined as an “artificially created language”. The Memorandum contends that at the end of WWII on August 2, 1944 at the Monastery of Prohor Pchinski the Macedonian language had been made official by a decree for the second time (the first time being the Comintern Resolution of 1934), without it having any linguistic norms.

The Memorandum continues by stating that the Republic of Macedonia is a Serbo-Communist creation of Svetozar Vukmanovic-Tempo and Lazar Kolishevski. According to the authors of the National Strategic Platform, the People’s Republic of Macedonia within Yugoslavia was created based on anti-Bulgarian Macedonianism. In this sense, Tempo and Kolishevski¹² are the creators of the state line of anti-Bulgarianism in Macedonia, the project concerning the individual Macedonian language. Thus, according to the authors, Tito and Tempo had appointed three orthographic committees, which after a yearlong debate under direct control of the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party, had created norms for the Macedonian language.

According to the analysis, the Macedonian language had been created in a swift manner. It is not a natural language as the other languages as it is not a result of a centuries long and independent development. This language also does not have a defined dialectal basis upon which it would further develop. Therefore, the authors claim, the invented language rules cannot be learned and are not based upon academic rules.

In a conclusion, the Macedonian language is named a political language. The motive for its creation was to serve the Yugoslav Federation, more

¹² Even by the mere mentioning of their names, the people of the Republic of Macedonia even today expresses dissatisfaction.

precisely the Serbs, so that with time it would turn into a Serbian language. Thus, the newly created written norm of the Macedonian language has a regional character, as it is an official norm only for one part of geographical Macedonia. The other two parts, the Pirin and the Aegean, do not use the norm.

In support of the aforementioned claims, the Memorandum states that aside from the Serbian Macedonism in Vardar Macedonia, there is a Greek Macedonism in the Aegean part. Hence, it is claimed that from 1946-1949 the Greek Communist Party had created an Aegean-Macedonian nation different from the Skopje nation, giving it another Aegean-Macedonian language. So, the authors contend, upon a Bulgarian basis two languages are created – one in Greece and another one in former Yugoslavia. Simultaneously, the authors emphasize that the creators of the Aegean language openly say that they had used the “Basic Bulgarian Grammar” by prof. Andrejchin and the traditional Bulgarian alphabet. Consequently, whereas the creators of the second Macedonian language do not intend to separate it from the Bulgarian literary norm, the creators in the Republic of Macedonia continue the line of Novakovic for gradual Serbianization of the Bulgarian language through the efforts to create a Macedonian literary language as a political order from Belgrade, executed by the Skopje subjects.

The final argument against the originality of the Macedonian language in the Memorandum states that the name “Macedonian” language itself represents plagiarism. In the linguistic science, they claim, the term Macedonian language denotes another non-Slavic language that has nothing in common with the modern language formation in Skopje, which is based upon a Bulgarian essence. The Macedonian tribes Orests, Lyncests, Erodeans, Elimioti, etc, were ethnically close to the Greek tribes in Thessaly. As early as 148 AD, the old and real Macedonia had been conquered and divided by Rome. The ancient Macedonians had been romanized and hellenized, their language had become extinct and there is little information about it.

Additionally, the Memorandum claims that during the VI and VII centuries the lands are inhabited by Bulgarian Slavs, and by that time there had been no trace of the Ancient Macedonians. The name of the region had again been revived during the Greek renaissance. Until then, the territory had been called Lower Moesia, as opposed to Upper Moesia (North Bulgaria).

According to the Memorandum’s interpretations, the historical tradition of Bulgarians was interrupted in 1994 when the Skopje “alchemists” had erased the word Bulgarian even in authentic historical documents. Then the Memorandum continues with a plethora of criticisms and negative characterizations of the Macedonian historians, literates and linguists.

Thus, for instance, Dragan Tashkovski was named a Skopje historian and a falsifier of the deed “The Biography of Clement of Ohrid by Teofilakt” (XI_XII centuries). The publication of the Selection of Poems by the Miladinovi Brothers is also characterized as a destruction of the

Bulgarian culture, as the Macedonian version is entitled “Selection”, whereas the original deed was entitled “Bulgarian Folk Poems”.

In addition, Blazhe Koneski is called an unfinished Bulgarian student who had studied in Sofia under the name Blagoj Konev.¹³ As one of the most prominent Macedonian academics, Blazhe Koneski is named a plagiarist. It is claimed that he had plagiarized the fundamental premises of the “Historical Grammar of the Bulgarian Language” by G. Kiselinov, and as a result he was selected to become a member of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Bozhidar Vidoeski has been accused for rewriting the bibliographical works of M. Mazhdarakova (1905), H. Gerchev (1911) and S. Stojkov, and their republishing under the title “ A Prologue Toward the Bibliography of the Macedonian Language” (1953), and this is cited as a fact for his admission into the Macedonian Academy, which in fact is incorrect.

Finally, the authors claim that the list of intellectual thefts is so large that volumes of bibliographies could be created. The letters of Goce Delchev, as it is claimed, had been translated from Bulgarian into a Serbianized Bulgaria, whereas the verses of Vapcarov were translated into a folkloric “native” language in the variant of the Tempo-Kolishevski duet.

According to the Bulgarian Memorandum, all these fabrications had a unique goal - to deceive the new generations. The Skopje academic research has significance from Gevgelija to Kumanovo, and outside of its borders it has no relevance. The Macedonian linguistics had turned into a linguistic mythology, the history into a historical mythology, and the humanities into yet another mythology.

III. Draft-Program for actions on protecting the Bulgarian national interest

The two documents attribute to the current condition and to the problems in the bilateral relations between Macedonia and Bulgaria to the stubbornness and the irredentism of the Macedonian authorities. Thus, according to the National Strategic Platform, the Government and the complete state apparatus of Macedonia have raised a true “Berlin Wall” between Macedonia and Bulgaria. An example for this is the alleged prohibition of Bulgarian books and journals in Macedonia, and the alleged prohibition of showing Bulgarian films and music. The ultimate conclusion is that between the two states there is a very unfavorable cultural exchange. The Memorandum, consequently, locates the sole

¹³ Frequently these “academic” institutes produce and distribute pamphlets in order to portray the Macedonian academics as fabricators and traitors of the Bulgarian cause, serving the Serbian cause. One such exceptional case of a severe, and even disgraceful attack against Blazhe Koneski is the pamphlet issued by the Macedonian Scientific Institute in Sofia. The pamphlet was signed by Dragi Leskov Dragnev and entitled “The Skopje Icon Blazhe Koneski (Macedonian linguist or a Serbian polit-bureau servant?)” (Agency “Sofia Press”, 1998). This propagandist pamphlet attempts to completely discredit the deeds of the founder of the modern Macedonian linguistics, purely for ideological reasons.

problem between the two states into the current leadership of Macedonia that propagates the traditional line of anti-Bulgarianism and thus perpetuates the creation of disputable issues.

Based on such a defined factual fundament, the crucial question to be posed is: what does the Bulgarian academia propose the Bulgarian state to do in order to protect the Bulgarian national interests?

In this sense, the Scientific Institute of Bulgaria proposes an unambiguous program for the protection of Bulgarian national interests in Macedonia, i.e. the protection of the “Bulgarians” in the Republic of Macedonia.

Firstly, the Bulgarian state should inform the world public and diplomatic circles that recognizing a Macedonian nation and language would be groundless, especially if this language and nation are different from the Bulgarian nation and language.

Additionally, Bulgaria should implement policies of the protection of the right for self-determination of the Macedonian Bulgarians. Bulgaria should raise the issue of the implementation of European norms for the national rights of Bulgarians in Macedonia, such as the right to freedom of speech, right to self-determination, right to establish ethnic parties, right to acquisition of Bulgarian sources – newspapers, radios, television and other materials from scientific institutions in Bulgaria, etc.

With regard to the right to access to information from Bulgarian sources, the Bulgarian National Strategy particularly emphasizes the need to organize and implement a systematic and widespread activities in order to demystify the fabrications of the Bulgarian history, language, tradition and system of values. In order to achieve this, the Bulgarian National TV should be allowed to broadcast its signal on the entire territory of Macedonia. The Bulgarian print media should pose a decisive resistance to all of the slurs, defamations and fabrications by Macedonian media. As an immediate task, it is suggested that newspapers and magazines with topics from Bulgarian life and history are printed and distributed for free in Macedonia.

In the context of the above, the state should financially help the Macedonian Scientific Institute of Sofia so that it could systematically research and publish important papers for the Macedonian questions. In such a manner, all of the evidence for the pro-Serbian circles in Macedonia would be presented to the world.

A strategic task should also be the adaptation of Constitutional and other acts of Bulgaria in order to allow equal rights for the Bulgarians of Macedonia with the other Bulgarian citizens. This means facilitated regulations to admit Macedonian citizens into Bulgarian citizenship.

As for the economic policies, the Institute proposes cancellation of customs duties for products made in Macedonia. Also, Bulgaria should take a greater role into the Macedonian economy by investing into the

Macedonian privatization process. Bulgaria should try to secure markets for Macedonian products in order to increase economic exchange, as well as the exchange of ideas.

One of the priorities, the Institute suggests, should also be awarding scholarships to students from Macedonia to study in Bulgaria. Other priorities include intensifying academic contacts and securing specializations at Bulgarian universities and academic institutions which would be free of charge. Cultural exchanges are also considered very important, particularly by organizing festivals, poetry gatherings and other forms of cultural cooperation. Sports contacts and the increased flow of Bulgarian tourists into Macedonia should promote the awakening of the Bulgarian national consciousness in Macedonia; believe the authors of this Strategy.

One of the strategic goals should also be the normalization of the relations between the churches in the two countries and creating a brotherhood of churches.

The objective of this paper was to offer an elaborate view of the thematic foundation of the two publications published by two different Bulgarian institutions: The Memorandum on the Bilateral Relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia by the Macedonian Scientific Institute, and the National Strategic Program "Bulgaria in the 21st Century" by the Bulgarian National Center for Scientific Strategy.

By illustrating the contents of these programs we tried to cast a light to the essence, focus, and range of the Bulgarian anti-Macedonian propaganda. The comparative approach in the analysis of the two programs reveals the same ideological background and a severe anti-Macedonian attitude. This anti-Macedonian attitude has been reflected through the denial of the Macedonian state (which is considered a creation of the Comintern), of the Macedonian nation (which, according to this ideology does not exist and is Bulgarian) and of the Macedonian language (which is an artificial creation and a Serbianized version of the Bulgarian language). These three pillars create the fundamentals of the Bulgarian nihilism and degradation of the Macedonian national individuality and uniqueness.

These programs can in no way be considered scientific creations and would not withstand scientific confrontation. They can mainly be characterized as political propaganda for the purpose of denying the Macedonian state and nation. However, these documents are important for the fact that they have been used for the creation of Bulgaria's official state policy and significantly influence the bilateral relations between the two countries.

As a conclusion, the promotion of "unsolved" questions based on anti-Macedonian ideological foundations is a factor creating significant tensions and confrontations in the relations between Macedonia and

Bulgaria. It appears that without the marginalization and the isolation of such and similar programs, the tensions and confrontations that burden the bilateral relations cannot be overcome and left to the past.

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