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Between the Ottoman and Serbian States: Carigradski Glasnik, an Istanbul-based Paper of Ottoman Serbs, 1895–1909

In this essay I investigate *Carigradski glasnik* (*Constantinople's Messenger*), an Istanbul-based periodical written by Ottoman Serbs between 1895 and 1909. This journal was a direct product of Serbian diplomatic circles in Istanbul aimed at audiences in Ottoman Macedonia, a region which was claimed by Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian countries as their own national territory and which soon became a political arena for the spread of national propaganda intended to persuade the Slavic-speaking Orthodox population of its respective Greek, Serbian, or Bulgarian national roots. *Carigradski glasnik* propagated the idea of Serbian nationhood and fought for the establishment of a Serbian Millet. Essentially, it was an attempt to create nationhood from above, propagating “Serbianness” as envisioned by its editors and Serbian diplomats. It was engaged in the dispute over Ottoman Macedonia, which in the historiography is known as the Macedonian question.

Keywords: Ottoman Macedonia, national consciousness, propaganda, newspaper, print media, Serbia, Young Turks, national struggle

Following the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate in 1870, the struggle over Ottoman Macedonia intensified. Bulgaria and Greece emerged as the most serious contenders. They promoted concepts of Bulgarian and Greek nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia and also fostered the nation-building process within their own borders. Each of these countries tried to legitimate their claims to Ottoman Macedonia, but the Berlin Congress in 1878 put the Greek–Bulgarian struggle into question because some of the decisions that were made at the Congress affected the situation in Ottoman Macedonia. Specifically, in addition to the fact that Ottoman Macedonia emerged as an international problem and came to be regarded by the great powers as a region that needed to be reformed, Serbia, after having lost Bosnia and Herzegovina, also decided to attempt to establish and strengthen its position there.

However, the intention of Serbian diplomatic circles, and therefore of *Carigradski glasnik*, was not to undermine Ottoman sovereignty but rather to act in accordance with it. Unlike Bulgaria, which fostered revolutionary activities in the region from 1895 in order to sever Ottoman Macedonia from the Ottoman

Empire and eventually annex it, Serbia calculated that it was in its interests that Macedonia remain within the Ottoman Empire. As a latecomer to the struggle for control of the territory, Serbia had to consolidate its position in the region. For this, it needed an ally, which is why the Serbian state supported and acted within Ottoman sovereignty. Each country had the same aim: to keep Ottoman Macedonia within the Ottoman Empire. For this reason, *Carigradski glasnik* operated fully in accordance with Ottoman press regulations. Moreover, it was published in Istanbul, under the strict surveillance of the Ottoman censors, and the editorial staff went out of their way to demonstrate the utmost loyalty of the Ottoman Serbs to the Sultanate. Since *Carigradski glasnik* diligently propagated the image of the Ottoman state, on some occasions it was hard to believe that the paper was actually a product of Serbian irredentist plans in the region.

As the periodical of Serbian diplomatic circles, *Carigradski glasnik* promoted Serbian nationhood as a stable, fixed and clear entity that had existed from time immemorial and that therefore distinguished the Serbian nation from the other nations in the Ottoman Empire, especially from the Slavic Bulgarians. This was the main mission of Serbian diplomatic circles in Istanbul. Thus, the main mission of the periodical was also first to convince its readers that shared aspects of culture such as language and specific celebrations were evidence of shared Serbian nationhood and second to emphasize the (alleged) loyalty of the Serbian nation in the Empire in order to obtain *Millet* status.¹ Furthermore, although the Serbian diplomatic mission propagated fixed Serbian nationhood and the owners and editors of *Carigradski glasnik* were employed for this matter, the personal data of the two last owners did not reveal a strict and well-defined notion of

1 According to mainstream historiography, Ottoman society was not united but was strictly divided into religious communities, that is to say, Millets. This interpretation sees religious communities within clear cut-lines and defined religious identities; a system where religious institutions operated within a set of privileges supposedly granted to them by the Ottoman governments. This set of privileges, the cornerstone of the Millet system, essentially meant the right to independent communal affairs, for example a juridical or education system. Nevertheless, with the emergence of national ideas in the 19th century, defining Ottoman subjects in terms of religious affiliation was no longer adequate. The Rum Millet under the Ecumenical Patriarchate did not just consist of the Orthodox Christians as its members became Orthodox Greeks, Bulgarians, or Serbs, just to mention a few. Specifically, Bulgarian and Serbian national elites started to perceive the Ecumenical Patriarchate as a *Greek* Patriarchate. This led Bulgarian and Serbian elites to plead for recognition of their Millet i.e. national status in the Ottoman Empire. This recognition also meant the right to lead their own educational and religious affairs where Bulgaria and Serbia could launch their own national propaganda campaigns in their respective, Slavic languages. While the Bulgarians secured Millet status when the Bulgarian Exarchate was established, the Serbs living in the Ottoman Balkans remained under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate.

Serbian nationhood, but rather a fluid sense of national identity, which was quite common among the local Macedonian population. Nevertheless, unlike most of the recent scholarship on Ottoman Macedonia (e.g. Jane Cowan's or Victor Roudometof's edited volumes on Macedonia),² which approaches the study of nationhood from above (i.e. from the perspective of the state elites, who—like *Carigradski glasnik*—propagated a clear and fixed concept of nationhood) even when discussing its appropriation on the ground, I do not interpret nationhood from this perspective which sees fluid nationhood as a-national, but rather I interpret it as changeable form of practice.

This paper is divided into two sections: in the first section I analyze how *Carigradski glasnik* defined and propagated Serbian nationhood during the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II and the early Young Turk period, and in the second section I focus on fluid nationhood exhibited by Kosta Grupčević and Temko Popović, the last two owners and editors of *Carigradski glasnik*. The first section is based almost entirely on my findings in *Carigradski glasnik*, while the second section is based on the secondary literature, mostly on the work of Tchavdar Marinov, Bernard Lory, Paschalis Kitromilides, Victor Friedman and others who touch upon some aspects of nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia.

Carigradski Glasnik and Serbian Nationhood during the Hamidian and the Early Young Turk Periods

Ottoman Serbs were not recognized as a Millet in the Ottoman Empire, but since the abolishment of the Peć Patriarchate in 1776, Ottoman Serbs had again become part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, where they remained until the fall of the Ottoman Empire. For the Ottoman Serbs, not being recognized as a Millet presented certain difficulties, since they were deprived of religious and educational autonomy. This was an aggravating circumstance given that Bulgarians, characterized as the worst enemy of both Serbs and Greeks, obtained Millet status in 1895, granting them complete jurisdiction over their own religious and educational affairs. Another problem that was particularly serious in the context of the Greek-Bulgarian-Serbian war of statistics (in which quantity meant more than quality) was the fact that the Ottoman Serbs officially

2 Jane Cowan, ed., *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference* (London: Pluto Press, 2000); Victor Roudometof, ed., *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 2000).

did not exist in the Ottoman Empire.³ This was the result of the 1881 and 1903 Ottoman censuses, which were based on denominations, i.e. on *Millets*. As the Ottoman Serbs were not recognized as a Millet, and the Millet was seen as a basis for counting “collective consciousness”, this meant that Ottoman Serbs were not officially recognized in the Empire. Rather they were registered accordingly as part of the Ecumenical Patriarchate or even the Bulgarian Exarchate. In addition, because these censuses were seen as the basis upon which Balkan irredentist claims were tested, the Greeks and Bulgarians challenged the Serb’s right to legitimate territorial claims in the region.⁴

Nevertheless, this problem, known as нуџијско питање (*nüfus question*) in Serbian scholarship, was seen as two-sided. Namely, many Serbian diplomats, including Stojan Novaković, thought it was useless and even counterproductive to insist on solving the *nüfus question* because the real number of the Ottoman Serbs would be revealed, and perhaps this would not be in the interests of the Serbian state. In their opinion, Serbian nationhood was *de facto* recognized because Serbia could more or less equally participate in the struggle for Ottoman Macedonia through Serbian consulates, schools, and churches, and this was what mattered.⁵ However, generally the Serbian government did not share this opinion, and on a few occasions it tried to solve this problem. *Carigradski glasnik* was engaged in this issue as well because it was charged with the task of constantly emphasizing the Serbian presence in the Ottoman state and propagating and defining Serbian nationhood in the Empire. According to an issue of the periodical published in 1899, “if the nation wants to be preserved as a nation, then it should have its own church and school. This is especially necessary here, where one nation lives together with other nations.”⁶

Naturally, this periodical pursued its aims in accordance with Ottoman press laws and procedures and also with consideration of the political atmosphere of the period. During Hamidian period, in which most of the issues of *Carigradski glasnik* were published, the constant assurance of loyalty to the Sultan

3 Basil C. Gounaris, “Social Cleavages and National ‘Awakening’ in Ottoman Macedonia,” 5, accessed July 22, 2014, <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/VirtualLibrary/downloads/Gounar01.pdf>.

4 İpek K. Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 149.

5 Miloš Jagodić, “Нуџуско питање: проблем званичног признавања српске нације у Турској, 1894–1910”, *Историјски часопис* 57 (2008): 345–48.

6 “Народ ако хоће да се одржи као народ, треба да има своју цркву и школу. Особито је то нужно овде, где један народ живи у друштву са другим народима.” “Леп пример,” *Carigradski glasnik*, hereinafter *CG* 5, no. 6 (1899): 1.

was necessary in order to survive. Not only did the Ottoman state demand affirmations of loyalty from the periodical, Serbian diplomatic circles also came to realize that Serbian national goals could only be achieved with the assistance of the Ottoman Empire. Loyalty to the Sultan was usually expressed in the following words:

The Serbian nation in His vast Empire is well-known for its humble loyalty, every time and on every occasion it warmly prays to the Lord Almighty for the good health of its Master, who also cares for His subjects.⁷

This day in the hearts of all loyal subjects of the Ottoman Throne raises great joy, especially in the heart of Serbian nation. This is a chance for the Serbian nation to express its great love for its Divine Master, as well as its gratitude for the benefactions and mercifulness with which He lavishes his faithful Serbs.⁸

Avowals of loyalty to the Sultan and affirmations of the strong image of the Ottoman Empire in publications like *Carigradski glasnik* were carefully monitored, as clearly illustrated by the press collection found in the Yıldız Palace archive, which, according to Selim Deringil, ranged from well-known publications like *The Times* to “obscure Serbian or Bulgarian publications.”⁹ However, no matter how obscure *Carigradski glasnik* might have been for the Ottomans, the fact that it was read not just in Ottoman Macedonia (a region that was rife with tensions), but also outside the Ottoman Empire was grounds enough for the Ottoman image management teams that Deringil describes to pay special attention to its content.

Due to the meticulousness of the Ottoman censors, during the Hamidian period *Carigradski glasnik* resembled more an Ottoman propaganda paper than a Serbian one. It operated within the bounds set by Ottoman press regulations and imperial sovereignty, which demanded utmost loyalty to the Sultan, who was portrayed as the benevolent father who took care of his good-hearted and

7 “Српски народ у његовој пространој Царевини, који је добро познат са своје поданичке верности, свагда и у свакој прилици топло се моли Свемогућем за повољно здравље свога Господара, који и њему поклања своју високу пажњу.” “19. август 1903. године,” *CG* 9, no. 34 (1903): 1.

8 “Овај дан који у срцима свију верних поданика Османског престола побуђује велику радост, особито је подгрева у срцима српског народа, јер се њему овом приликом указује прилика да изрази како своју превелику љубав према свом Узвишеном Господару, тако исто и захвалност према свима добротинствима и милостима, којима своје верне Србе Он обасипа.” “7. Децембра,” *CG* 5, no. 50 (1899): 1.

9 Selim Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains* (London–New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 136.

naïve children in the organs of the print media that thrived during his reign. Throughout the period, *Glasnik* operated according to these rules. Although violence was a constant fact of life in Ottoman Macedonia, until the Young Turk revolution and the liberalization of the Ottoman press this paper usually wrote about Ottoman Serbs as the most loyal subjects of Sultan Abdülhamid. The paper particularly stressed its loyalty during the Armenian massacres. Oddly enough, Armenian publications did the same thing. On a few occasions in 1896, *Carigradski glasnik* did publish notes on articles appearing in Armenian periodicals in which there was constant emphasis on Armenian loyalty to the Sultan, distancing the Armenian population from the troublemakers.¹⁰

Carigradski glasnik used every opportunity to praise the devotion of Ottoman Serbs to the Sultan, in contrast to the other, disloyal Christian communities of the Empire, and the periodical represented the Serbs as subjects who deserved to be recognized as a Millet. The usual tropes perpetuated the notion that Ottoman Serbs were one of the rare nations that had had to fight and endure a calamitous fate over the course of its existence, but despite all the obstacles, they always managed to survive and preserve the Serbian name and nation. For instance, one finds the following lament in an 1898 issue of the periodical:

There is no nation under the sky that has passed through harder and more horrible times than the Serbian nation. Every Serb who has even minimally investigated the past life of his nation, will know what these troubles were, when they took place, and how difficult they were. In addition, there are not many nations like the Serbian one, which has amazingly resisted its accursed fate; with great faith in the Lord and the Holy Orthodoxy, and with great pride in its name and nationhood.¹¹

Not surprisingly, contributors to *Carigradski glasnik* claimed that it was only during the years of Abdülhamid's reign that Ottoman Serbs finally enjoyed prosperity, because they were allowed to bolster their nationhood and freely proclaim it in the Serbian schools, which were seen as the battlefields of nations. Certainly this represented an allusion to the “book and pen” struggle in Ottoman

10 “Јермени” [Armenians], *CG* 2, no. 35 (1896): 1.

11 “Нема ваља да под капом небеском народа, који је пролазио кроз тежа и мучнија времена од народа српскога. Сваки Србин који је ма и најповршније проучавао минули живот свога народа, знаће у чему су, када и колико биле те недаће. Али, исто тако, и мало народа који је, као српски, необичном издржљивошћу одолевао мало наклањеној судбини својој, те живом вером у Господина Бога и Свето Православље, а поносан именом и народношћу својом.” “Реч у своје време,” *CG* 4, no. 2 (1898): 1.

Macedonia, where religion and education bolstered nationhood. For this reason, it is not surprising that *Carigradski glasnik*'s call to school resembled a call for war:

Run to school, you little Serb! This call is aimed to you because you have great and divine duties to your name. Nowadays nations are competing on the field of cultural progress. Instead of a battle of swords, we have a battle of minds. This battle determines the survival or decline of the individual and the nation. School is the one thing that will prepare you for this cultural game. So go to school, you too little Serb. School is the sacred duty that will prepare you for cultural work and the game on this field, on which, whether you like it or not, you must show yourself. The Serbian nation showed that it has the talents and abilities that are necessary for culture. In school you will strengthen your mind and raise your heart. Without this, one cannot be a Serb.¹²

Excerpts from articles show how *Glasnik*'s writers discussed Serbian nationhood as something timeless and unchanging and something that distinguished Serbs from all other nations. For instance, in an 1898 issue of the periodical one author made the following contention:

Nationhood cannot be lost even when deceived individuals take different names or when different names are imposed upon them forcefully. The armor of our nationhood is our past, language, folk songs and customs and above all *slava*¹³—the service—and many other characteristics that distinguish the Serbian nation from other nations.¹⁴

12 “Стога похитај у школу, и ти Српче драго! Тебе се особито тиче тај позив јер те очекују велике и свете дужности према имену твоме. На пољу културнога напретка данас се намећу народи. Место мачем и коњем дошла је борба умом, борба, која је одлучнија за живот, за опстанак или пропадање било појединца, или народа. За ту културну утакмицу спремиће те школа. Па хајде у школу, и ти Српчићу. Школа је тај свети задатак да те спреми за културни рад и утакмицу на томе пољу на коме се ти, хтео не хтео, мораш показати, а српски народ је показао да има свих способности и услова који су потребни за културу. У школи се челичи ум и облагорађава срце. Без тога Србин не може бити.” “Пред школским спратом,” *CG* 3, no. 33 (1897): 1.

13 The *Slava* is a family religious celebration that takes place in Serbia and denotes celebrations on the day of the specific saint who was chosen as a protector of a family. Every family has its saint protector, who is passed on from father to son. Unlike other Orthodox countries, in which saint days are not associated with family celebrations, in Serbia this custom was present from the Middle Ages and is considered to be a specifically Serbian tradition.

14 “А народност се у суштини не губи чак ни онда, кад заведени појединци друго име узимају, или им се оно намеће. Народности нам је штит прошлост, језик, песме и обичаји, а нарочито слава – служба – и много других одлика које српски народ оштро од других народа разликују.” “Реч у своје време,” *CG* 4, no. 2 (1898): 1.

Slava, this is our national characteristic. Slava is the most distinguished feature by which we differ from other Slavic nations. Language, customs, tradition, folklore, even physiognomy also differentiate us from them.¹⁵

This notion of clear-cut lines between the ethno-religious communities of the Ottoman Empire was used by the authors who contributed to *Carigradski glasnik* to prove the “separate existence” of the Serbian nation. Celebrations of exclusive Serbian saints like Saint Sava were meant to contribute to the preservation of Serbian nationhood among the local population in Ottoman Macedonia. For *Carigradski glasnik*, Serbian nationhood in the Ottoman state was clear. It did not have to be imposed upon the local population, but rather developed and was preserved from the Bulgarian, Greek or even Ottoman attempts to restrain and even deprecate the Serbian nation. For this reason, *Carigradski glasnik* paid as much attention to the celebrations of such occasions, such as the *slava* or Saint Sava, as it did to the yearly inaugural celebrations of the Sultan. The subscribers were encouraged to send descriptions of the festivities that were taking place throughout areas where Ottoman Serbs lived in order to bolster and stress the clear uniqueness of Serbian nationhood in comparison to nationhood of other peoples.¹⁶ Furthermore, such celebrations fostered the Serbian “imagined community” (to use Benedict Anderson’s term):

On Sava’s day, the entire scattered Serbian nation will be united in their thoughts, and all those thoughts concentrate around the Serbian nation as the defender of the Holy Orthodoxy and the Serbian name; around the revival of Serbian education and progress; around saint Sava, the grandest of the grand among Serbs. There is no Serbian pupil who does not know of his enlightener; there is no Serb who would not pay adequate respect to those who laid the foundations of Serbian education.¹⁷

15 “Slava, to je nace narodno obeležje. Slava je najistaknutija osobina po kojoj se mi razlikujemo od ostalih narodnosti slovenskoga stabla. Razlikuju nas od njih i jezik, i običaji, i predaња, i nošnja, pa i sam izgled lica.” “Slava,” *CG* 1, no. 50 (1895): 1.

16 Peter Alter, “Nineteenth-Century Serbian Popular Religion: The *Millet* System and Syncretism,” *Serbian Studies* 9 (1995): 88–91.

17 “Цио раштркани српски народ биће на Савин дан уједињен мислима, а све те мисли концентришу се око браниоца св. Православља и српског имена, око препородитеља српске просвете и напретка; око највећег међу највећим Србима – Св. Саве. Нема тога српског ђаћета које не зна за свога просветитеља; нема тога Србина који не био одао достојно поштовање ономе, који постави чврсти темељ просвете српске.” “Мисли у очи светосавског славља,” *CG* 10, no. 2, (1904): 1.

Hence, although operating within the limits of Hamidian censorship and the political atmosphere of the time, in which loyalty to the Sultan had to be continuously stressed, *Carigradski glasnik* managed to promote Serbian nationhood even on occasions such as the Sultan's birthday or anniversaries of ascension. On such occasions it used discourse of "we" and "them" in order to distance Ottoman Serbs from other nations and show that the Ottoman Serbs deserved a separate Millet.

Only after the Young Turk revolution and the passage of less restrictive press regulations did *Carigradski glasnik* begin to advocate Serbian interests more openly. Immediately following the revolution very little changed in the discourse. Abdülhamid remained untouchable, and the proclamation of the constitution was entirely attributed to him. The following passage from a 1908 issue of *Carigradski glasnik* points to how the Ottoman Serbs and other communities actually did expect meaningful changes from the Young Turk regime:

Sweet months of His Rule were accompanied by a harsh fate. Reformed glorious Turkey had to save the country from danger that was threatening from the outside. This attempt was stopped by the evil will of the Sultan's advisors, whose personal interests were more important than the public one. In their irresponsibility they brought the country to the edge of doom. The voice of suffering and the exhaustion of the people reached the Throne of our Almighty. On 11 June our divine Ruler brought an end to these intrigues. 11 June is a day of freedom, a day of progress, a day of a rejuvenated Turkey! In the rejuvenated constitutionally free Turkey the Sultan Abdülhamid celebrates the thirty-third year of his coming to the Ottoman Throne. This thirty-third year is the most glorious in the reign of our divine Sultan. It is the beginning of the renaissance of our homeland based on the equality and brotherhood of all the Ottoman nationalities with the protection of civil freedom and safety. With him begins the Resurrection of our native land in all possible cultural directions. Long Live Constitutional Sultan Abdülhamid II! Long Live!¹⁸

18 "Медене месеце Његове Владавине пратила је тешка коб. Реформисана славна Турска требала је да спасе земљу од опасности које јој с поља претиле. покушај је насео на злој вољи саветника Круне којима је лични интерес био пречи од општега народнога. У својој неодговорности они су земљу били довели готово до ивице пропасти. Глас напавеног и измученог народа допро је и до престола Свемогућнега. Једанаестог Јула наш узвишени Владар учинио је крај вршењу сплеткама. Једанаести јуна је дан слободе народне, дан напретка, дан подмлаћене, васкрсле Турске! У подмлаћеној уставној слободној Турској Султан Абдул Хамид прославља по тридесет и трећи пут дан свог ступања на Престо Османа. Тридесет и треће лето је најславније у Владавини нашег узвишеног Султана. Оно је

These lines were written only a month after the revolution, so some of the big changes in the discourse, at least regarding Abdülhamid, could not be perceived. However, the reserved and loyal stance regarding the Sultan remained until the very end, that is to say, until the counterrevolution and Abdülhamid's deposition in April 1909. The same could not be said for some other periodicals, like the satirical press, which had been banned during Hamidian era but resurrected after the Young Turk revolution and which began to criticize the Sultan.¹⁹

The dethronement of the Sultan was seen as a “historical act” with which the Ottoman Empire ridded itself of a despot comparable to Caligula or Nero. This suggests that *Carigradski glasnik* was playing it safe, waiting until the actual dethronement of Abdülhamid. Only then, after fifteen years, did *Carigradski glasnik* change its rhetoric concerning Abdülhamid, transforming him from an adored patriarch into a monster:

...and exiled Abdul Hamid, intellectual culprit not just for the bloody rebellion in the army and its consequences, the blood fight in Istanbul on 11 April—but also for all the evils and misfortunes that our Fatherland endured during the 33 years of his calamitous and bloody governance. Abdul Hamid, the main obstruction towards progress and the prosperity of the Ottoman Empire, is removed from our path.²⁰

After the Young Turk revolution, not only did the Sultan become a monster; gradually the Young Turks' state also came to be portrayed as a monster as well. Like other communities in the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman Serbs expected too much from the Young Turk regime. When their expectations

почетак препoroђаја наше домовине на основи једнакости и братства свих народности Отоманске Империје уз заштиту личне слободе и сигурности. С њим почиње Васкрс нашега завичаја у свим могућним културним правцима. Живео уставни Султан Абдул Хамид Хан III Живео!” “19 Август,” *CG* 14, no. 34 (1908): 1.

19 Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908–1911* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 66–67.

20 “...и отеран у изгнанство Абдул Хамида, интелектуалног кривца не само за крваву војничку побуну и њене последице, крваве борбе у Цариграду 11 априла, ‘већ и за сва зла и недаће, које су нашу Отаџбину снашле у току 33 године његове несрећне и крваве владавине. Главна сметња Абдул Хамид уклоњен је с пута, који води напретку и преображају Отаџбине.” “Хоћемо праву слободу и потпуну једнакост!,” *CG* 15, no. 15 (1909): 1.

were not met, euphoria gave way to disenchantment.²¹ When the Hamidian patrimonial discourse was replaced by *Ottomanism*, according to which loyal subjects of the Sultan became Ottoman citizens equal in their rights, everyone expected that at least some of their problems would be solved. As *Carigradski glasnik* wrote, the news concerning the re-proclamation of the constitution was welcomed with great joy, especially because the Ottoman Serbs believed that the anarchical situation in Ottoman Macedonia would come to an end, and even more importantly, that Serbian nationhood would be finally recognized in the Ottoman Empire. As one contributor to a 1908 issue of the periodical wrote:

In all the places where the Serbian nation lives, the proclamation of the constitution was welcomed exceedingly, enthusiastically and gladly. The new days after the constitution were welcomed by the Serbian nation with the same feelings as were felt by all the other nations in the Empire. If anyone had suffered and struggled, it was the Serbian nation. It hoped that once this would come to an end, the days of freedom would come, when life would be guaranteed, if nothing else. Earlier its nationhood was not recognized. Like some little foster child in folk tales, it was placed here for a bit, there for a bit; it was added to the Patriarchate, then to the Christians, sometimes it was part of the Exarchate; but no one wanted to recognize this nation as a nation, as had been done with the Greeks, Bulgarians and the rest of the population. Its schools and churches were often closed, teachers and priests were sent to prison, and it simply waited patiently and hoped that better and kinder days would come.²²

21 The euphoria about the new regime, which was gradually replaced by disappointment and discontent, has been well-documented in the secondary literature. For example, see Vangelis Kechriotis, “The Modernization of the Empire and the Community ‘Privileges’: Greek Orthodox Responses to the Young Turk policies,” in *The State and the Subaltern. Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, ed. Touraj Atabaki (London–New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 53–70, accessed June 29, 2015, https://www.academia.edu/1545927/The_Modernisation_of_the_Empire_and_the_Community_Privileges_Greek_responses_to_the_Young_Turk_policies.

22 “На свима странама, где живи српска народност, воспостављење устава дочекано је и бурно и одушевљено и радосно. Нове дане после устава српски је елемент дочекао са оним истим осећањима која су обузела и остале народности царства. Ако је ико раније патнио и мучно, то је био он. Надао се да ће и том једном доћи крај, да ће доћи дани слободе кад ће бити сваком зајемчен бар живот, ако ништа друго. Раније му није била призната ни народност. Као како пасторче у народним причама, њега су туткали час овамо, час онамо те је придодаван патријаршистима, те придодаван хришћанима, неким делом убрјајан у егзархисте, али никако му се није хтело да призна, да он има своју народност, као што је то било случај са Грцима, Бугарима и осталима. Затварали су му школе, цркве, терали у апсане учитеље и попове, и он је све мирно сносио увек у нади да ће синупти и њему бољи и лепши дани будућности.” “Српска народност после устава,” *CG* 14, no. 31 (1908): 1.

However, *Carigradski glasnik* soon realized that the new political atmosphere was not as promising as had been hoped. The paper stressed that the Ottoman Serbs were certainly among the first to salute the changes introduced by the Young Turks because they expected that the proclamation of liberty and equality would be introduced into the provinces where the Ottoman Serbs mainly lived. However, soon after *Glasnik* expressed disappointment with the fact that none of these promises was kept in Ottoman Macedonia, the paper warned that guerilla bands were still the masters in the region, sometimes even backed by the representatives of the Ottoman authorities. For instance, in February 1909, Ottoman Serbs from Prilep defended two Serbian monasteries from Bulgarian bands, and on this occasion they sent a letter to Ottoman authorities, including the parliament, in which they demanded the protection of their rights. In the following passage I provide the complete text of the letter because it illustrates disillusionment with the new regime (which was prevalent among all of the Ottoman communities) and it also provides an example of how Ottoman Serbs portrayed themselves and the tropes they used when addressing the Young Turk authorities. Namely, they accepted the “official” discourse of the regime. Ottoman Serbs were not operating within a paradigm of loyalty anymore. The key terms became freedom and equality.

The Ottoman Serbs from Prilep and the surroundings gathered today at the national assembly to protest that the Bulgarian attacks on Serbian property are tolerated. They protest because Ottoman authorities protect Bulgarians and therefore cause damage to the Serbian nation and its property. They express their dissatisfaction with the Ottoman authorities for having allowed the Bulgarian entrance into distinctly Serbian monasteries: Zrze and Slepče; and not only that they allowed it, but that the gendarmerie offered it for the sake of maintaining peace and order. Zrze and Slepče are villages inhabited by Ottoman Serbs, and the monasteries are financed by entirely Serbian villages, which also provided them with estates. Bulgarians have no right to them, and will not have them because now our Fatherland enjoys peace and order. There are no Bulgarian villages near these monasteries; so Bulgarians have no legitimate right to claim them.

We are protesting against the terror that Bulgarian bands are inflicting and that is tolerated when they walk armed through our villages and force villagers to be Bulgarians, which was the case in Dolman and Dabnica; while a Serb is not tolerated even when he is unarmed.

The Serbian nation is deeply saddened when, in the times of freedom and equality, the Ottoman authorities treat it unjustly and separate it

from the other nations. For example, while Greeks and Bulgarians have bells on their churches, for Serbs this is strictly forbidden, and police even come to take the bells down, as was the case here in Prilep.

The Ottoman Serbs from Prizren and its surroundings legitimately demand back the monastery in Treskavac because it is situated in the middle of the Serbian population, which has maintained and financed it. Bulgarians violently—with the help of their bandit troops—took the monastery, and now it is illegitimately in their possession.

The Ottoman Serbs from Prilep and its surroundings are always prepared to give their lives for the happiness and progress, as well as for the preservation, of the Ottoman Fatherland; they do not want what is not theirs, however, they will defend what is theirs until the last breath.²³

23 “Срби Османлије из Прилепа и околине, скупљени данас на народном збору, протестују што се дозвољава, да Бугари насрћу на њихову имовину. Протестирају што се од стране власти Бугари протежирају на штету српског народа и његове имовине. Изјављују своје негодовање што су државне власти допустиле да Бугари уђу у чисто српске манастире Зрзе и Слeпчe, па не само што су их пустиле, већ су им и жандарме, ради веће сигурности, дале. Зрзе и Слeпчe села су насељена Србима Османлијама и манастири њихови издржавани су од села чисто српских, која су им и непокретна имања поклањала, те Бугари никаква права на њих немају, нити ће моћи имати, пошто је у нашој отаџбини завладао ред и поредак. Бугарских села нема у околини оних манастира и толико је од њих далеко, те никаквог законског ослоњца не могу имати, да својину манастира себи протезавају, пошто ту немају свога елемента.

Протестујемо против терора који врше бугарске чете, којима се кроз прсте гледа кад иду по српским селима наоружани и сељане терају да буду Бугари, као што је скоро случај био у Долману и Дабници, док се Србину на пут стаје и не наоружаном.

Српски народ налази се ожалостиен, кад и му у времену слободе и једнакости власти неправду чине и од других га народности одвајају, као на пр. Док Бугари и Грци по црквама могу слободно звона подизати, докле се Србима и њиховим црквама забрањује да им силом чак полиција скида звона, као што је случај овде у Прилепу био.

Срби Османлије из Призрена и околине с правом траже, да им се преда манастир Трескавац, јер се налази у средини српског живља који је тај манастир за толико стотина година чувао и издржавао. Бугари насилним путем помоћу њихових разбојничких чета овај су манастир отели и данас га незаконито пригежавају.

Срби Османлије у Прилепу и околини биће увек готови за срећу и напредак, као и за очување, Османске Царевине живот и све жртвовали, али тако исто изјављују: да туђе неће, а своје ће до последне капи крви бранити.” “Насртај на српске манастире,” *CG* 15, no. 7 (1909): 1.

Interestingly, Bulgarian documents offer a different perspective. Bulgarian monks from the area around Prilep complained in 1909 about the expropriation of the monasteries by Serbian villagers in 1906. The Young Turk authorities (re)placed these monasteries under the Exarchate. However, nearby Serbian villages refused to become part of the Exarchate, so the Bulgarian monks requested help from the Bulgarian state. The money given by the state was used to hire Albanians to collect the harvest yields from Serbian villagers. However, the Serbs refused to comply and resisted, while Ottoman authorities refused to interfere. I thank to Gabor Demeter for providing this information, found at Sofia, ЦДА, ф. 313к. оп. 2. а.е.10. л. 31.

Although dissatisfaction with the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was expected (*Carigradski Glasnik* published the article under the symbolic title *Српска голгота* [*Serbian Golgotha*]),²⁴ major discontent actually only came after the elections of the senate and parliament. Namely, of 40 senators elected by the government, 30 of them were Muslims, one was a Jew, while the rest were Christians. Among the Christians, all the communities were represented except the Ottoman Serbs. This obviously indicated that the Ottoman Serbs were not going to be recognized as a nation, which was accompanied by general frustration about the Ottoman Serbian position in the Empire. As one contributor to a 1908 issue wrote:

Injustice towards the Serbs in Turkey! Is this so horrible or so new? Is this the first, or will it be the last injustice against the Serbian nation in Turkey? Is this why we ponder and write about it? We do not know anything other than injustices, which have been coming, one after another, since time immemorial.

The Serbian nation, which consists of two million people in Turkey, is not represented in the Senate. On the other hand, Jews have their representative, although they do not live compactly as a nation but only as trade colonies; Bulgarians are represented, although they only live in Edirne vilayet and not in other parts of Turkey (because Slavic Exarchists in Salonika, Kosovo and Bitola vilayets cannot be considered Bulgarians), even Macedonian and Epirus Romanians who number barely 200,000 people, only the Serbs from the Government did not get a single senator.

Will they defend themselves by saying that there are no Serbs in Turkey, or that Serbian nationhood is not recognized in Turkey? But Serbs are in Turkey, the election for the national deputies has shown it. The three Serbs elected as national deputies from the Kosovo and Bitola vilayets have shown to the Bulgarians and all the others who say there are no Serbs in Turkey [that they are mistaken]. (...) It is the duty of these Serbian deputies to discuss this issue in the parliament and to insist categorically on solving this injustice to the Serbs. How this will be resolved is a matter for the Government, which after all committed this injustice.²⁵

24 "Српска голгота," *CG* 15, no. 13 (1909): 1.

25 "Неправда Србима у Турској! Зар је то тако страшно и тако ново? Зар је то прва, или ће бити последња, неправда српском народу у Турској, те се сада нишчуђавамо и о томе нишчемо! Ми и не знамо за ништа друго, него само за неправде, које се нижу једна за другом, од како нас је. Српски народ, који у Турској броји два милијона душа, није заступљен у Горњем Дому Парламента наше Отаџбине, а заступљени су Јевреји, који нигде не живе компактно као народ, него само као

Throughout this interregnum period until December 1909, when *Carigradski glasnik* was closed, early euphoria over the new regime was replaced by frustration because of the failure of the imperial authorities to recognize Serbian nationhood and the “sale” of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary. In short, the motto “we do not know justice, but we are tired of injustice”²⁶ became a popular Ottoman Serbian catchphrase after the Young Turk revolution.

Facts on the Ground: “Reckless” Serbian Propaganda and Fluid Nationhood

Although operating within different Hamidian and Young Turk frameworks, *Carigradski glasnik* managed to propagate Serbian nationhood successfully. This propaganda was accompanied by affirmations of utmost devotion to the Ottoman state, which was not just a tactic that allowed *Carigradski glasnik* to be published continuously, but was also a framework advocated by Serbian diplomacy. What one notices on the basis of the sections above is the clarity and decisiveness with which this periodical discussed Serbian nationhood. Ottoman Serbs were well-defined and separated from the other Ottoman communities, despite the fact that they did not have religious or educational autonomy, nor were Ottoman Serbs recognized as a nation within the Empire. What one can conclude on the basis of the writings that were published in *Carigradski glasnik* is that its editors were not fighting for the implementation of Serbian nationhood within the local Ottoman Macedonian population (because it was obviously implemented), but rather were fighting for the right to exercise this nationhood. Nevertheless, nationhood on the ground in Macedonia was generally not well-defined, even if *Carigradski glasnik* suggested in spite of this.

Serbian diplomatic circles did not have a clear idea concerning who was actually living in *Old Serbia* and northern Macedonia, both of which were regions

трговачке колоније; заступљени су Бугари, који сем у једренском вилајету и нема у садашњим границама Турске (јер ми Словене егзархисте у солунском, косовском, и битољском вилајету не можемо сматрати за Бугаре) – заступљени су македонски и епирски Румуни којих једва има 200,000 душа, само Срби нису добили од Владе ни једног сенатора.

Хоће ли се онда бранити тиме што ‘Срба нема у Турској, или што српска народност није призната у Турској? Али Срба има у Турској, показали су то избори народних посланика. Три Србина, изабрана народна посланика из косовског и битољског вилајета, запушили су уста Бугарима и многим странцима који велe да нас нема (...) Дужност је Срба народних посланика да ово питање покрену у Скупштини и да категорички траже да се та неправда учињена Србима, санира. Како ће се то учинити, то је ствар Царске Владе, која је ту неправду и учинила.” “Неправда спрема Срба у Турској,” *CG* 14, no. 50 (1908): 1.

26 “Ми за Правду не знамо, а неправде смо сити,” *idem*.

that the Serbian state claimed. Stojan Novaković, the leader of Serbian diplomatic circles in the Ottoman Empire, was even against the recognition of the Serbian element in the Empire because no one actually knew how many people regarded themselves as Ottoman Serbs. For this reason, the creation of established and elaborated Serbian diplomatic action that would infuse Serbian nationhood into the local population was of the utmost importance. However, neither Serbian diplomacy nor Serbian national workers acted together smoothly on the ground in Ottoman Macedonia.

For instance, the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs managed to open four consulates in Priština, Salonika, Bitola, and Skopje charged with implementing Serbian national action, i.e. spreading Serbian nationhood through religion and education on the ground. Yet remarkably, these four consulates barely communicated with one another. For instance, in a letter from 1894 written to the Serbian Ministry, Branislav Nušić, the Serbian consul in Priština, stated that he might have exaggerated when said that consulates exchange more than two letters per year. Even more, these institutions were spending excessive amounts of money even though Serbia always complained about the budget, and many projects were halted for this reason. As expected, the Serbian administration in the Ottoman Empire suffered from sluggishness and ineffectiveness. According to Nušić, Serbian were the only consulates in Ottoman Macedonia that were composed of consuls, vice-consuls, correspondents and translators. In some consulates, for instance in Skopje, the vice-consul sat at home all day long because he did not have anything to do in the office.²⁷

Indeed, complaints about the conduct of Serbian policy in Ottoman Macedonia were not rare. A report written by the Russian consul in Prizren almost ten years after Nušić's complaints shows how the professional propagandists, as Lory describes teachers and priests, did not always act as such. Namely, on several occasions in 1903, the aforementioned Russian consul wrote to the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs informing it that the Raška–Prizren's metropolitan Nićifor was not popular among the local population. According to the Russian consul, Serbian policy in Ottoman Macedonia was reckless:

Serbia here conducts propaganda and spends 100,000 Francs per year to win the love of the people (*narod*). However, it constantly angers them and spreads embarrassment and disunion. Rather than acting in

27 Miloš Jagodić, "Извештај Бранислава Нушића о путовању из Приштинe у Скадар 1894. године," *Мешовита грађа* 31 (2010): 281–84.

the interests of the community, it only creates intrigues and damage, which should not be tolerated. First of all, it is reckless to support the consul Avramović, whom people loathe, and the silly metropolitan (*vladika*) Nićifor. Recently they organized an orgy in the Gračanica monastery, where Serbs even beat up Avramović. This was even reported by “the press”. Metropolitan Nićifor does not behave like a pastor, but as an evil demon of the people. In Peć the metropolitan’s regent, Obrad the priest, defended Albanian criminals in front of the Ottoman authorities, and as a result, the people of Peć no longer invite him to their homes. In Đakovac for a long time the Serbs have not been on good terms with their priest. However, Nićifor does not care. In Prizren he does not recognize the municipality, and he does not engage with national work. The population of Prizren asked me several times to protect them from such a metropolitan. Someone should open Serbia’s eyes to its flawed policy here. It should be forced to stop thinking, and rather start working in consent with its people and with our support.²⁸

The authors of *Carigradski glasnik* articles also warned that even the lower Serbian clergy were lazy when it came to promoting national interests or fostering a sense of national unity. In an article published in 1897, the periodical mentioned that in the remote villages, where schools had not been established, the priests were the only workers on the national front, but instead of engaging with illiterate peasants and reading *Carigradski glasnik* to them, these priests were rather content to perform mere ceremonies, take their wages, and then leave the villages immediately afterwards.

In the Priština, Novi Pazar and Peć sanjaks there is no one in the villages. The priest comes, finishes his ceremonies, takes what is his, and leaves.

28 “Србија овде води пропаганду и траћи до 100.000 франака годишње да би придобила љубав народа, међутим она стално сраи народ и сеје међу њима смутњу и раздор. Уместо да се усклади с Вољом народа, она само ствара интриге и штети народу што се не сме допустити. Пре свега, безумно је подржавати конзула Аврамовића кога народ мрзи и шашавог владика Нићифора. Недавно су направили пијанку у манастиру Грачаница при чему су Срби пребили Аврамовића, о чему је писано у ‘Штампи’. Митрополит Нићифор се не понаша као пастир, већ као зли ђаво народа. У Пећи је намесник митрополита поп Обрад заступао Арнауте заливковце пред турским властима. Пећанци га више не позивају к себи. У Ђаковцу Срби одавно нису у добрим односима с свештеником. Ипак, Нићифор се не осврће на то. У Призрену не признаје општину и не бави се народним пословима. Призренци су ме више пута молали да их заштитим од таквог митрополита. Треба Србији отворити очи о њеној политици овде. Натерати је да не митингује, већ да ради у корист своју и народа у сагласности с народом и нашом подршком.” Jaroslav Valerijanovič Višnjakov, “Македонски покрет и преврат у Србији 29. маја 1903,” *Tokovi istorije* 3 (2010): 19.

And this is repeated continuously. And yet we imagine that the task of a true Serbian priest is not just to finish ceremonies, charge and leave, no! We imagine, as this is what being a priest means, that he should pause and educate villagers about religion, virtues and something similar. Furthermore, the priest should inform peasants about the news regarding agriculture. We are writing articles on agriculture, but not for the citizens, because this is not their concern; we are writing them for peasants, and as they are illiterate—as we know very well—we were and we are counting on priests and teachers, but especially on priests, because teachers cannot reach as far as priests can.²⁹

With the teachers the situation was not much better, since *Carigradski glasnik* again reported that some teachers spent more time in the local bars than they did in schools, or were behaving violently:

First, we must emphasize the unpleasant fact that some places from the heartland inform us, and we know this from the personal experience as well, that a worm of suspicion erodes relationships between the teachers. The teachers working together within the same school and within the same community should live together in brotherhood and harmony, like priests in the temples of education and like national intelligentsia; instead, in most cases, they slaughter one another like yellow crazy ants, complaining about one another, contriving devious intrigues to destroy one another; in one word, they are disgracing their holy educational mission, as well as their positions as national workers.³⁰

29 “У приштинском, новопазарском и пећком санџаку по селима нема никога. Осим тога, парох дође, сврши обреде, добије његово па оде. И то тако непрестано бива. Ми пак замишљамо, да задатак правог свештеника Србина није само да сврши обред, да се наплати и да иде – не! Ми замишљамо, и то као неразавојно са свештениковом службом, да свештеник треба да стане, па да укућанима и њиховим гостима да који зрео савет о вери, о грађанским врлинама и томе слично, а осим тога да их упозна са новостима из пољопривреде. Ми што доносимо чланчиће о пољопривреди, не доносимо их за грађанство, кога се они ништа не тичу. Ми их доносимо за сељаке: а пошто су они неписмени – то је нама добро познато тамо – рачунали смо и рачунамо на свештенике и на учитеље, али нарочито на свештенике, јер они други не могу да допру докле могу свештеници.” “Свештеницима,” *CG* 3, no. 7 (1897): 1.

30 “Морамо да на првоме месту истакнемо немилу чињеницу, како нам из неких места из унутрашњости јављају, а и сами из сопственог искуства знамо да црв неслоге подгриза у неколико наше учитељство. У место да учитељи који служе у једној школи, у једном месту, живе братски и другарски, како би домиковало њима, као свештеницима у храмовима просвете, као народној интелигенцији, они се, у већини случајева кољу као жути мрави, негодују један против другог, прибегавају ниским интригама, да би један другог скрхали, једном речју, раде онако како је зазорно и за њихов свети положај наставнички, и за особни позив и положај њихов као народних васпитача.” “Искрена реч,” *CG* 3, no. 26 (1897), 1.

Along with the (dis)organized Serbian propaganda campaign, the efforts to spread Serbian nationhood were equally ineffective on the ground. However, this was not something peculiar to the Serbian nationalists. Even the more elaborate and aggressive Bulgarian propaganda campaigns, which involved employed guerrilla activities and coercion, faced the same problem. In fact, Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian elites had to use many tools, including coercion, in order to create a sense of nationhood among the local Christian population in Macedonia. Jovan Jovanović-Pižon, who was in charge of the consular affairs in the Ottoman Empire, asserted that Serbia should support the local Slavic population, be sensitive to their needs, and not be violent, but rather full of appreciation. Only if Serbia were to do this would the “amorphous and nationally hermaphrodite mass start to have trust in national workers who represent Serbian national thought there. Only in areas where we have devoted and skillful national workers will our national cause develop.”³¹ According to Jovanović-Pižon, it was natural to assume that “professional propagandists” were the ones who were most interested in educating and spreading “Serbian national thought” in Ottoman Macedonia. This was expected to be the case with the owners and editors of *Carigradski glasnik* as well. However, unlike Nikodim Savić, who was the first owner and undoubtedly felt like a Serb, the other two owners, Kosta Grupčević and Temko Popović, exhibited more fluid understandings of nationhood, which was characteristic for the Slavic population of Ottoman Macedonians.

Both Grupčević and Popović were born in Ohrid. They were Ottoman Macedonian upper-middle class intellectuals who were educated in Greek schools. According to Lory’s assertion, according to which school teachers were professional propagandists in the service of the Balkan states and in charge of spreading national ideologies,³² it is quite surprising that Greek education did not manage to infuse in Grupčević and Popović the feeling of *Greekness*, which Kitromilides defines as “a voluntary identification [that] had to be instilled and

31 “аморфна и у погледу националних осећања хермафродитска маса становништва почне с поверењем гледати на људе, који у тим странама представљају српску народну мисао. У којим смо крајевима имали раднике вештије и послу преданије, тамо је наша народна ствар и напредовала.” Aleksandar Ristović, “Реферат Јована Јовановића о односу Србије према реформској акцији у Солунском, Битољском и Косовском вилајету,” *Мешовита зраба* 31 (2010): 366.

32 Bernard Lory, “Schools for the Destruction of Society: School Propaganda in Bitola 1860–1912,” in *Conflicting Loyalties in the Balkans*, ed. Hannes Grandits, Nathalie Clayer, and Robert Pichler (London–New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 53.

cultivated through a crusade of national education.”³³ Instead, Greek education developed a vague feeling of *Macedonianness*, which Marinov identifies as supra-national identity “intended to bring together—under the common denominator of ‘Macedonian people’—members of different ethnic, confessional and national groups.”³⁴ In other words, *Macedonianness* is a direct consequence or, more precisely, construct of the competing Balkan ideologies. Marinov provides a few examples of how this *Macedonianness* found expression. However, these examples yield only one conclusion: it is not quite clear what *Macedonianness* means because all the Macedonian intellectuals defined it and expressed it in a different way, including Grupčević and Popović. According to Marinov, “there are historical personalities from late Ottoman Macedonia whose identity largely ‘floated’ between the Serbian and the Bulgarian national option,”³⁵ and between them appeared the third Macedonian option, which was used by Serbian diplomatic circles as “a possible counterweight to Bulgarian influence in Macedonia.”³⁶ Stojan Novaković concretely assumed it would be much better to use the already present vague sense of this *Macedonianness*, and turn, harness and mold it to Serbian advantage, instead of attempting to impose Serbian nationhood directly upon Macedonians.³⁷ This was obviously the case with the two owners of *Carigradski glasnik*, who turned from the Greek education they had been given and their vague sense of *Macedonianness* to Serbian nationhood.

Historians do not know precisely when Grupčević and Popović came into contact with Serbian diplomatic circles or an official Serbian “state” agenda. The first trace of their pro-Serbian activities dates from 1886, when both of them, along with Naum Evro and Vasil Karajovov, established the anti-Bulgarian secret Macedonian Committee in Sofia. Probably around this time they came into contact with Serbian circles, because they moved to Belgrade as soon

33 Paschalis Kitromilides, “‘Imagined Communities’ and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans,” *European History Quarterly* 19 (1989): 169.

34 Tchavdar Marinov, “We, the Macedonians: The Paths of Supra-Nationalism (1878–1912),” in *We, the People: Politics of National Peculiarity in Southeastern Europe*, ed. Diana Mishkova (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2009), 111.

35 Tchavdar Marinov, “Famous Macedonia, the Land of Alexander: Macedonian Identity at the Crossroads of Greek, Bulgarian and Serbian Nationalism,” in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans*, vol. 1, ed. Roumen Daskalov and Tchavdar Marinov (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 315.

36 *Ibid.*, 317.

37 *Ibid.*, 315–17.

as Bulgarians learned of their activities.³⁸ In 1887, Grupčević and Novaković were trying to publish a newspaper entitled *Македонски глас* (*Macedonian voice*) in Istanbul in a Macedonian dialect, but they never got permission to do so. However, they clearly expressed their intention to start a paper in Istanbul that would promote Serbian interests.³⁹ The fact that this paper, the harbinger of *Carigradski glasnik*, was meant to be published in the Macedonian (probably Ohrid) dialect confirms that Novaković intended to bring that dialect gradually closer to the Serbian language. Although this paper was never published, we can trace this idea in the work of Temko Popović, who in 1887 published the anti-Bulgarian pamphlet on the Macedonian dialect and Serbian orthography.⁴⁰ We do not know when Grupčević and Popović, along with Novaković, abandoned this idea, but what is certain is that in 1888 Popović sent a letter to Despot Badžović in which he made the following statement:

The national spirit in Macedonia has reached such a state that Jesus Christ himself, if he were to descend from heaven, could not convince a Macedonian that he is a Bulgarian or a Serb, except for Macedonians in whom Bulgarian propaganda has already taken root.⁴¹

However, ten years later Grupčević and he were involved with *Carigradski glasnik*, the paper that was published in standard Serbian and that clearly advocated Serbian ideas. Obviously their *Macedonianness* turned into *Serbianness*, which indicates that fluid nationhood was not something reserved for illiterate peasants in Ottoman Macedonia, but was even found among urban intellectuals acting as promoters of the Serbian national idea.

This is one of the many examples to which recent historiography on Macedonia frequently refers, always with the same conclusion, namely that Macedonians had no sense of nationhood, but rather expressed blurred and fluid identities that were, as Marinov has shown, shaped and created under the influence of the Balkan ideologies. However, expressing multiple national identities does not necessarily mean that these persons were a-national simply because they did not represent “the existence of some ‘genuine’ or ‘proper sense

38 Victor A. Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity,” in *The Macedonian Question: Culture, Historiography, Politics*, ed. Victor Roudometof (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 185.

39 AS, SN, 128, Letter from Novaković to Ristić, 1887.

40 Marinov, “Famous Macedonia...,” 318.

41 Temko Popov, letter, accessed May 17, 2014, <http://documents-mk.blogspot.hu/2011/01/temko-popov-letter.html>.

of national identity' that all the members of a certain well-bound collectivity or 'group' are equally, absolutely and constantly aware of."⁴² In Rogers Brubaker's fashion we can rather say that they exhibited nationhood as a form of practice that changes and adapts to different circumstances.⁴³ In this sense, Grupčević and Popović did not represent a-national blur and fluid character, as studies on Macedonia suggest. Rather, they represented nationhood as different forms of practice. Thus, their nationhood was not fixed, but it was also not a-national or fluid. Rather, it was a response (or set of responses) to the interplay of different factors, depending on the current Macedonian context. In other words, "these elites formed a kind of 'middle class' which adopted discourses and strategies linked to changes in their political and social positioning, as well as to their search for power or their efforts to remain in power."⁴⁴

Grupčević and Popović's case brings us to the problem of the appropriation of nationhood, more specifically, how nationhood tends to be researched from above. In other words, historians have tended to examine how Balkan states imposed nationhood on local populations, and how the local population showed a fluid and a-national sense of nationhood. Even when scholars are investigating this appropriated nationhood on the ground, they approach the problem from an "imperial" perspective, defining nationhood as a fixed substantial entity envisioned by state elites (much as it was presented in *Carigradski glasnik*), and not as a discourse prone to change. Jovanović-Pižon noted that the Macedonian question and the implementation of nationhood could not be solved through religion or education because populations were looking for alternatives that would help them address their everyday problems.⁴⁵ As Basil Gounaris has shown in his study of the Patriarchate-Exarchate race for the local Christian population, the battle for new members was not based on religious rhetoric but rather on the personal, economic or simply pragmatic concerns of local peasants.⁴⁶ Lory also stresses that the local inhabitants in Macedonia "gave free rein to the propaganda programs that they considered advantageous to them, in that they provided free education. We are struck by the very short-term vision with which educational issues were treated. Only the families of major merchants

42 Marinov, "We, the Macedonians...", 108.

43 See Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 2004); *Nationalism Reframed* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

44 Hannes Grandits et al., "Introduction," in *Conflicting Loyalties...*, 10-11.

45 Ristović, "Реферат Јована Јовановића...", 345.

46 Gounaris, "Social Cleavages...", 5-7.

had any genuine educational strategies for their offspring. Trades people, who were more numerous in Bitola, were very vulnerable to economic fluctuations and to life's misfortunes such as illness, deaths, or fires."⁴⁷

In other words, choices regarding nationhood were determined primarily by pragmatic and not idealistic factors. Branislav Nušić, the vice-consul in Bitola in 1892, vividly described responses to Greek, Bulgarian, and Serbian propaganda among the local population of one entirely Slavic-speaking village:

The church is Greek, the school is Exarchal, two priests are "Serbomans"⁴⁸... In the house of Vandel—the priest—Serbian books are hidden in a basement; periodicals from Sofia are on the table; one son is a student in Belgrade; the second son is an Exarchal teacher in Skopje; the third son is a former student of the Austrian Catholic mission; and two children are attending Exarchal elementary school. Priest Vandel even holds a han in his house.⁴⁹

However, we should not make the mistake of jumping to the generalization that the entire Macedonian population expressed multiple identities and was pragmatic regarding nationhood. Although it is difficult to discuss how *Carigradski glasnik* was appropriated on the ground and how it was accepted among the local population as opposed to professional propagandists (like priests or teachers), we still can assume that it created an "imagined community" by bringing people together around shared characteristics that were described by *Carigradski glasnik* as the features of Serbian nationhood. As Fox and Miller-Idriss stated, "nationhood is also implicated in the choices people make. People 'choose' the nation when the universe of options is defined in national terms. Reading a nationalist newspaper or sending one's child to a minority language school can thus be defined and experienced as national choices."⁵⁰

47 Lory, "Schools for the destruction..." 54.

48 *Serboman* is a pejorative term used by Bulgarians for Slavic-speaking people in (Ottoman) Macedonia who claim to be of Serbian ethnicity, support Serbian national ideas, or simply refuse Bulgarian national ideas.

49 "Црква је грчка, школа егзархијска, два свештеника су "Србомани"...У кући свештеника – поп Ванђела – српске књиге скривене у подруму, софијске новине на столу, један син питомац српски у Београду, други егзархијски учитељ у Скопју, трећи бивши питомац аустријске католичке мисије, а два детета посећују егзархијску основну школу. Поп-Ванђел држи у својој кући и хан." Slavenko Terzić, "Конзулат Краљевине Србије у битољу (1889–1897)," *Историјски часопис* 57 (2008): 338–39.

50 Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, "Everyday nationhood," *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (2008), 542.

Conclusion

Although Serbia only entered the battle for Macedonia in 1885, approximately ten years later it managed to achieve its main goals: opening Serbian consulates, promoting Serbian priests into higher ecclesiastical positions, opening schools and Serbian societies in Ottoman Macedonia, and finally establishing a Serbian paper that would propagate Serbian interests in the region within the limits of Ottoman press regulations. This indeed seems impressive on paper, but the situation on the ground was far too unwieldy for these strategies to work effectively. The Serbian state spent a considerable amount of money on a rather disorganized propaganda campaign, national workers often did not work in a professional or coordinated manner, consulates were unaware of one another's activities despite the fact that they were not physically distant from one another, and the great gap between Serbian national workers and the local population was not bridged well.

Under these circumstances, only *Carigradski glasnik* diligently completed its mission. However, because of Ottoman press regulations it was forced to present a euphemized reality that local readers simply did not buy into. In spite of these facts, this paper managed to bring its readers (Serbian national workers, educated and the illiterate population to whom *Carigradski glasnik* was read) together, focusing on topics that, according to the paper, constituted aspects of Serbian nationhood, such as language, celebrations, folk songs and customs. In this sense, *Carigradski glasnik* certainly propagated Serbian nationhood in a manner in which it was envisioned by Serbian elites and members of the intelligentsia.

It was a "war of statistics," as Gounaris has called it, in which quantity was much more important than quality. This was one reason why certain Serbian diplomatic circles were terrified of solving the *nüfûs question*. The urban intelligentsia from the region sometimes displayed multiple and shifting loyalties despite the efforts of the schools they attended. The case of Kosta Grupčević and Temko Popović illustrates this well. Although they attended Greek schools they did not become "Hellenized" Macedonians, but rather gradually became (Macedonian) Serbs. On the other hand, the illiterate rural population did not have time to contemplate nationhood. Only coercion or pragmatic interests yielded results. However, the somewhat mixed nature of these "results" is illustrated clearly by the citation from Nušić. Three seemingly different propaganda campaigns had a strong effect on the careers of people in a single family. The cultural identities of the Balkans were entangled indeed.

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