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CATALAN NATIONALIST PERSPECTIVES ON THE ILINDEN UPRISING OF 1903

The Ilinden uprising –begun on Saint Elya’s Day, the prophet Elijah, August the 2nd–occupies a leading place in Macedonian national tradition.¹ Many historians even consider it as one of the first significant political manifestations of Macedonian national consciousness.² The

¹ The 2nd of August is today a national holiday in the Republic of Macedonia in celebration of the initiation of statehood. For different approaches, see: James Frusetta, “Common Heroes, Divided Claims: IMRO between Macedonia and Bulgaria”, in John Lampe, Mark Mazower (eds.) *Ideologies and National Identities* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2004), 110-130; Hristo Andonov Poljanski, *The Attitude of the U.S.A. Towards Macedonia: the 19th century and during the Ilinden Uprising, 1903* Macedonian Heritage Collection, Macedonian Review Editions, 1983; Манол Пандевски, Македонското ослободително дело во XIX и XX век, Илинденско востание, том II, Мисла, Скопје, 1987 [Manol Pandevski, *Macedonian Liberation Deed in the XIX and XX Century, Ilinden Uprising*, vol. II, Mislа: Skopje, 1987]; Todor Cheoreganov (ed.) *History of The Macedonian People*, Skopje: Institute of The National History, 2008; Ulf Brunnbauer, “Serving the Nation. Historiography in the Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) after Socialism”, *Historien*, 4, (2003-04): 161-181; Tchavdar Marinov, “We, the Macedonians. The Paths of Macedonian Supra-Nationalism (1878-1912)”, in Diana Mishkova, (ed.), *We, the People. Politics of National Peculiarity on Southeastern Europe* Sofia: Centre for Advanced Study Sofia Working Paper Series 3, (2011): 1-29. The authors thank the Journal editors for the completion of some references with Macedonian language sources. When this occurs, English titles appear into brackets.

² The Macedonian historiography considers the documents and activities from the insurgents of the Kresna Uprising (1878/79) as previous political manifestations of national consciousness. See Кресненското востание во Македонија 1878-1879, зборник на трудови, Македонска академија на науки и уметности, Скопје, 1982 [“Kresna uprising in Macedonia”, *Conference Proceedings*, Skopje, Makedonska akademija na naukite i umetnostite, 1982]; Правилата – Уставот на Македонскиот

uprising in the summer of 1903, centered on Monastir vilayet, which confronted between some 15-20.000 insurgents against far superior Ottoman forces, greatly attracted the interest of the European press. Such attention was mainly due to the interest of the Great Powers (namely, France, Britain, Russia and Austro-Hungary) in Macedonia as a buffer zone, the Balkan crossroad of East and West. But morbid curiosity also derived from the violence surrounding the crushed revolt, which was often related in detail.³ This paper explores how Catalan nationalism, in Spain, at the other end of the Mediterranean, perceived the events in Macedonia through opinion articles in the press.⁴

Catalan Nationalist Curiosity regarding Macedonia

In the nineteenth century, seen from Western European eyes, "Macedonia" was a place, but hard to define.⁵ Obviously, it was a clear historical reference to ancient times, but that had scant relevance to then

востанички комитет во Кресненското востание, Славко Димевски, Иван Катарџиев и други, Институт за социолошки и политичко-правни истражувања, Скопје, 1980 [Slavko Dimevski, Ivan Katardziev and others, *Rules - Constitution of the Macedonian Uprising Committee in Kresna Uprising*, Skopje, Institut za socioloski i politichko-pravni istrazhuvanja, 1980]

³ Dimitrije Djordjevic, *Revolutions nationales des peuples balkaniques 1804-1914* (Belgrade: Institut d'Histoire Beograd, 1965), 196.

⁴ Without any aspiration to successfully follow his lead, the inspiration for the current article is: Marco Dogo, *La Dinamite e la Mezzaluna: La Questione Macedone Nella Pubblica Italiana, 1903-1908* Udine: Del Bianco, 1983. An accidental but perhaps convenient comparison between Catalan and Macedonian nationalisms can be found in the parallel publication, one after another, of Gerhard Brunn, "The Catalans within the Spanish Monarchy from the Middle of the Nineteenth to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century", and Fikret Adanir, "The Macedonians in the Ottoman Empire, 1878-1912", in Andreas Kappler (with F. Adanir and A. O'Day), (eds.), *The Formation of National Elites*, vol. VI, *Comparative Studies on Government and Non-Dominant Ethnic Groups in Europe, 1850-1940* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 133-159, 161-191.

⁵ Throughout this paper, the authors follow Hugh Poulton, *Who are the Macedonians?* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 1, and use the term "Macedonia" (with quotes) to refer to the Macedonian geographical region of the 19th century -and not an independent state or political entity- bounded to the north by the Skopska Crna Gora and the Shar Planina mountains; to the east by the Rila and Rhodope mountains; to the south by the Aegean coast around Salonica, Mount Olympus and the Pindus mountains; and to the west by the lakes of Ohrid and Prespa. Because of the kinds of sources, the article concentrates on events in Macedonia, and does not deal except in passing with the simultaneous revolt in the Adrianople district of Ottoman Thrace.

current circumstances. Its modern borders were undefined in the extreme.⁶ Seen from Barcelona, there was an awareness of another major Mediterranean port, Salonica, but again, its complexity was not that of its hinterland, in Thrace or in the mountains beyond. At least a third of Salonica's inhabitants were Sephardic Jews, who spoke antique Castilian (or sometimes even Catalan), and had been largely forgotten in Spain until after Spain's Moroccan interventions, starting in 1859-1860.⁷ *Sapir* or *lingua franca*, an advantage of Mediterranean port life for Catalan speakers, paradoxically blocked much understanding of what might lie behind the Ottoman city. Most political information about life under the Ottomans was received through French sources, both press and especially *reportages* in book form.

Although the Greek War of Independence (during 1821-1832) or the *Tanzimat* reforms of the Ottoman Empire (between 1839 and 1876) caught some occasional attention, this remained limited to Spaniards writing in exile or to adaptations (rather than strict translations) of foreign books.⁸ It was rather the end of the historic "Eastern Question", born at the Peace of Vienna in 1815 and closed by the Berlin Congress

⁶ Early French travellers had already noted the variety of peoples of the region: by 1740, a "*Macédoine*" was a mixed-fruit salad, a lasting metaphor for a jumble; the term for the dessert passed quickly from French to Spanish and to Catalan. See "*Macédoine*" in the online Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales (CNRS). In *Ancien Régime France*, a "*Macédoine*" was also a card game in which the dealer could decide what rules to play. See Christopher Boehm, *Blood Revenge. The Enactment and Management of Conflict in Montenegro and Other Tribal Societies* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987. For the "invention" of the Balkans, see: Larry Wolf, *Inventing Eastern Europe. The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994; and Božidar Jezernik, *Wild Europe. The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers* London: Saqi Books, 2004

⁷ See Gilles Veinstein (ed.), *Salonique 1850-1918. La "ville des Juifs" et le reveil des Balkans* Paris: Autrement, 1993; Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts. Christians, Muslims and Jews 1430-1950* London: Harper Books, 2004. For Spanish attitudes: Danielle Rozenberg, *La España contemporánea y la cuestión judía*, Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2010, chaps. 1-4.

⁸ For an indicative Spanish text: Fermín Caballero, *La Turquía, teatro de la Guerra presente*, Madrid: Imprenta Eusebio Aguado, 1828 (2nd ed.); Caballero (1800-1876) was in exile approximately from 1823 to 1833, became a major figure in Spanish politics; he wrote at least three works on "Turkey". As an example of foreign works adapted or translated see Ubicini [sic: the French journalist Jean-Henri-Abdolonyme Ubicini, 1818-1884], *El Tanzimat organización de la Turquía actual en todos sus aspectos [...]*, Madrid: Imprenta José Trujillo, hijo, 1854.

in 1878 that opened eyes and initiated deeper curiosity.⁹ By the Berlin agreement, Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania attained recognized statehood, in addition to Greece, by then long independent. The accord also acknowledged an autonomous Principality of Bulgaria, with control of "Eastern Rumelia" (finally incorporated in 1885, so that the new ruler, a Saxe-Coburg –who replaced a Battenberg–, could proclaim himself “Prince of the Two Bulgarias”), which was set up under the Sultan’s suzerainty, even if subject to clear Russian influence. But at Berlin the Ottomans were unyielding in retaining the territory between Serbian gains and the new Bulgarian entity.¹⁰ Any understanding in the West of “Macedonian” realities was blocked by the scarcity of concrete literature, literary or otherwise, that was not in Serbian, Bulgarian or Greek, and could be divulged by specialized “orientalists”.¹¹

This meant that "Macedonia", however understood, became a permanent problem seen with “Western” eyes or in terms of the “Concert of the Powers”, a problem eventually dubbed "balkanization" probably around the time of the 1912-1913 conflicts, in which all the great powers, old and new, near or maritime, were directly implicated.¹² Balkan statehood meant also religious independence, and the

⁹ See, for the chronological cut-off: Andrew Baruch Wachtel, *The Balkans in World History* New York: Oxford University Press, 2008; A good example: Felix Bamberg, *La cuestión de Oriente*, Barcelona: Montaner y Simón, [after 1929] (written by a German consular official, translated from the corresponding volume of Oncken’s *Allgemeine Geschichte*, 1888-1892).

¹⁰ Édouard Driault, *La Question d’Orient depuis ses origines jusqu’à la Paix de Sevres* (1920) (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1921), 234.

¹¹ See for example, a work by a top French specialist with no allusion to Macedonia: Louis Leger, *Serbes, Croates et Bulgares. Études historiques, politiques et littéraires* Paris: Maisonneuve, 1913. The classic statement on “orientalists”, see Edward Said, but in the French edition, with a special addition on French writers: E. W. Said, *L’Orientalisme: l’Orient créé par l’Occident* Paris: Robert Laffont, 1980; the vision of “orientalism” should be understood as extensible to all Ottoman territories. It should be added that such an ignorance of Macedonian circumstances persisted well into the twentieth century: such a classic anthology of monographic studies as Peter F. Sugar and Ivo J. Lederer, (eds.), *Nationalism in Eastern Europe* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969, includes no chapter on Macedonian nationalism, despite the notoriety of the IMRO.

¹² Gaston-Routier de Beaulieu, *La Macédoine & les Puissances. L’Enquête du Petit Parisien* Paris: Dujarric et Cie., [1904]; the same reporter, better known by the more prosaic Gaston Routier, much given to covering Spanish events, also published: *La Question macédonienne (On doit aux peuples la vérité)* Paris: H. Le Soudier, 1903. In general, see: Fikret Adanir, *Die Makedonische Frage: Ihre Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1908* Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1979.

confirmation of autocephalous Orthodox churches, strongly nationalist and no longer willing to submit to the Greek patriarchate. This change, marked by increasing nationalist manners learnt in London, Paris, Vienna and even Saint Petersburg in the 1870s and 1880s, made nonsense of the Ottoman system of administration by *millet* or religious grouping in which all *Rumí* were lumped.¹³ In Macedonia, the absence of an autonomous or recognized church led to rival schools in Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, with armed bands willing to impose linguistic, religious and national discipline.¹⁴ Of course, the region also harbored Gypsies, Jews, Armenians, and, as a different style of being, Albanians, as well as, obviously, “Turks”.¹⁵ Even the Romanians, basing as always their claims on peripatetic Vlach shepherds, presumed to have a say in any (anticipated) territorial division.¹⁶ The rivalries were fierce, and

¹³ *Rumí* was the Turkish term for Romans and Orthodox Christians. Under the millet system, the word “Turk” usually meant “Muslim” regardless of language; the word Greek meant ‘Greek Orthodox Christian’, not Hellenophone; and the word Bulgarian was used to refer to speakers of South Slavic dialects. Therefore, the most important opposition in Macedonia or European Turkey was between Muslim/Christian. See, Victor A. Friedman, “The Modern Macedonian Standard Language and its Relation to Modern Macedonian Identity” in Victor Roudometof, (ed.), *The Macedonian Question. Culture, Historiography, Politics*, East European Monographs (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 173-201. Nevertheless, it should be added that, for the Ottomans and until the rise of Kemalist nationalism, “Turk” was a demeaning word that signified a Turkish-speaking Anatolian peasant.

¹⁴ Basil G. Gounaris, “Social cleavages and national ‘awakening’ in Ottoman Macedonia”, *East European Quarterly*, 29, (1995): 409-426. In Macedonia, a specific autocephalous church was not achieved until well into the next century.

¹⁵ See the classic British account by H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*, London, Methuen & Co., 1906, available online at <<http://www.promacedonia.org/en/hb/index.html>>. Brailsford (1873-1958) was the main correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian* for Mediterranean subjects, considered a person of strong leftist opinions, although he follows early twentieth century ideas about “race”. On the Albanians, see the contemporary work by a French observer Jaray (1878-1954), young, but with considerable experience of the Balkans: Gabriel Louis-Jaray, *Au jeune Royaume d’Albanie* Paris: Hachette, 1914, chapter VII, “Les marches albanaises de l’est: Struga, Okrida, Resna et Monastir”. On “Turks”, in general, as a minority, by a living Turkish diplomat: see: Bilâl N. Şimşir, *The Turks of Bulgaria (1878-1985)* London: K. Rustem & Brother, 1988.

¹⁶ As an example: Theodor Capidan, *Les Macédo-Roumains. Ethnographie, histoire, langue* Bucarest: Fundatia Regala Literatura si Arta, 1943. See also H.N. Brailsford, *op. cit.*, chapter VI. Clear data only came in the aftermath of the 1903 revolt, with a “1903 census”, actually realized in 1905-1906: see İpek K. Yosmaoğlu, “Counting Bodies, Shaping Souls: The 1903 Census and National Identity in Ottoman Macedonia”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 38, n. 1 (February

easily inspired the defense of a local, "Macedonian" nationalist option, with both guns and the will to act.¹⁷ Such Macedonian revolutionary action was directed not just against the Turks, and also Christian rivals. The alternative options of independence or adherence to Bulgaria even led Macedonians to intervene actively in Bulgarian politics, so as to achieve a fearsome and worldwide reputation, after the Ilinden uprising –and the related and roughly simultaneous Preobrazhenie revolt in Thrace– in the summer of 1903.¹⁸ The current debates between nationalist historians regarding the “authentic” Macedonian and/or Bulgarian nature of the underground movements lie beyond the scope of this paper, and, indeed, the linguistic capacities of its authors.¹⁹

2006): 55-57. On the background implications: see Fikrit Adanir, *Sociopolitical Environment of Balkan Nationalism: the Case of Ottoman Macedonia, 1878-1912*, printed text presented at the European Forum Conference on “Regions and Political Cultures in Europe in the 19th and 20th Centuries”, European University Institute, March 24-26, 1994.

¹⁷ Originally called the Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (MRO), at its foundation in Salonica in 1893, later it changed its name for Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation (SMARO) and from 1905 it was first known as Internal Macedonian-Adrianople Revolutionary Organisation (IMARO), with a rival “External” or “Supremes” organization in Bulgaria, which thought in Greater Bulgarian terms. Only after the first Bulgarian annexation of Macedonia (1915-1918), and the organization’s revival in 1920, did it become famous as IMRO. In general, see, Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Liberation Movements, 1893-1903* Durham: Duke University Press, 1988, and also Nikola Minov, “The Aromanians and IMRO”, УДК 94(497.7:135.1)“1903”; Иванка Анастасова, Дивна Симиќ, Македонска историографија за Македонската револуционерна организација (ВМРО) и Илинденското востание: библиографски прилог, Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 1993 [Ivanka Anastasova, Divna Simić, *Macedonian Historiography of The Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) and Ilinden Uprising*, Bibliographic Contribution Skopje: Institute of National History, 1993].

¹⁸ A contemporary source, the Bulgarian agrarian Kosta Todorov gives a lively description: K. Todorov, *Fuego en los Balcanes* Buenos Aires: Poseidon, 1943, especially chaps. I-II. For the violent reputation of the IMRO in the interwar period, see the Bulgarian articles of star Parisian reporter Albert Londres (1884-1932): A. Londres, *Terrorismo en los Balcanes* [1931], [Barcelona]: Melusina, 2010; Манол Пандевски, Македонското ослободително дело во XIX и XX век, т. I -VI, Мисла, Скопје, 1987 [Manol Pandevski, *Macedonian Liberation Deed in The XIX and XX Century*, vol. I -VI Skopje: Mislа, 1987].

¹⁹ For an official history of IMRO in Bulgaria see *Natzionalno-osvoboditelnoto dvizhenie na makedonskite I trakiyskite balgari* [National Liberation Movement of Macedonia and Thracian Bulgarians], 4 vols., Sofia: Macedonian Scientific Institute, Institute of History at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1994-2000. For a Macedonian approach see Ivan Katardzhiev, *Sto godini od formiranjeto na VMRO – sto*

Similarly, the attribution of the 1903 “revolution” as an expression of conscious anarchism, also a current historical theme (especially in Barcelona), will not be dealt with here.²⁰

“Eastern Wars” were followed with some relative attention in the Spanish press, not too much, as Spain was no longer a great power by the 1870s, and in any case had no acknowledged “interests” in the area, until the Salonica Sephardim were discovered by the Spaniard doctor Ángel Pulido (1852-1932), precisely on a Balkan trip in 1903, who then devoted the rest of his life to their recognition in his homeland.²¹ Local journalists (not necessarily foreign correspondents) published books with detailed descriptions of the conflicts taken from the international press, beginning with the Crimean War (1854-1856), and continuing with the struggles of 1876 and the resulting Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.²² This style of illustrated publication continued, with photographic lithography replacing steel engraving, right up to the Italo-Turkish War

godini revolucionerna tradicija [One Hundred Years from the Formation of IMRO – One Hundred Years of Revolutionary Tradition], Skopje: Kultura, 1993; Иванка Анастасова, Дивна Симиќ, Македонска историографија за Македонската револуционерна организација (ВМРО) и Илинденското востание: библиографски прилог, Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 1993 [Ivanka Anastasova, Divna Simić, *Macedonian Historiography of The Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) and Ilinden Uprising: Bibliographic Contribution*, Skopje, Institute of National History, 1993]; Todor Cheoreganov (ed.) *History of The Macedonian People*, Skopje, Institute of The National History, 2008

²⁰ Georgi Khadziev (translated by Will Firth into English, and then by M. Gómez into Spanish), *La Comuna de los Balcanes. El levantamiento de Macedonia y Tracia de 1903* Barcelona: Aldarull Edicions, 2010.

²¹ See Ángel Pulido y Fernández, *Españoles sin patria y la raza sefardí* Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1993 (a facsimile of the 1905 edition, with a study by María Antonia Bel Bravo); a filial biography: Ángel Pulido Martín, *El Doctor Pulido y su época* Madrid: Imprenta F. Domenech, 1945. To a large extent, until Pulido’s agitation, the debate regarding the immigration of Spanish Jews to Spain was centered on North Africa: see Isidro González, *El retorno de los judíos* Madrid: Nerea, 1991.

²² Andrés Borrego, *La Guerra de Oriente* Madrid: Casa Emilio Serra, Ed., [1856]; for a French model: *Histoire de la Guerre d'Orient* Paris: Gustave Barba, n.d., 4 vols. For a current evaluation, see Orlando Figes, *Crimea: The Last Crusade* London: Allen Lane, 2010. For the Russo-Turkish War, see Torcuato Tárrago y Mateos, *Rusos y turcos. Historia de la Guerra de Oriente* Madrid: Jesús Graciá, Ed., 1878, 3 vols.; or *La Guerra de Oriente por un distinguido militar español emigrado* Barcelona: Juan Pons, 1877-1878, 3 vols.

of 1911-1912, the two Balkan wars of 1912-1913, and indeed right into the Great War of 1914-1918, as always following French examples.²³

The brief Serbian-Bulgarian strife of November 1885, too short-lived to get much attention in Spain, indicated the degree to which the two Slavic neighbors were ready to battle for control of Macedonian space, as well as their shared jealousy of Greek border gains from the Sultan in 1881). The short war also served the British stage with George Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* in 1894, and in passing pointed to the unruly passions of both Serbs and Bulgars. Much light literature, in numerous languages, was devoted to the image of "Ruritania", the idea of a tiny Balkan kingdom, under a German dynast, and a source of danger (the famous novel *The Prisoner of Zenda* by Anthony Hope –1863-1933– also appeared in 1894, to undying editorial –and film– success).²⁴ The cliché of the "powder keg of Europe" was in place by the turn of the century, as a result of the Cretan War between Greece and the Ottoman Empire of 1896-1897, with the creation of an international administration for the island, under Turkish suzerainty but with a Greek prince for president.²⁵

The extreme changes in the Balkans after 1878 coincided with the rise of a coherent and explicit Catalan nationalism. The turning point was the publication in 1886 of a weighty political study, titled *Lo Catalanisme*, by the very political and cultural activist Valentí Almirall (1841-1904), as the culmination of a large-scale campaign which included the first Catalan-language newspaper, together with two major assemblies of leading citizens to create a groundswell of sentiment, establish the Centre Català (or "Catalan Center") as a political platform, so as to then present a petition to the ailing King Alfonso XII asking for tariff protection for Catalan industries, and some degree of home rule administration (much in the line of the Irish Parliamentary Party of Parnell in Great Britain, put forth in parliament by the Liberal Party head

²³ See the well-illustrated "formative reconstruction of the campaign" by José Brissas, *La Guerra de los Balcanes (1912-1913)* Barcelona: Maucci, [1913]; and, *La guerra de Oriente, 1912-1913* Barcelona: Pons y Comp., [1913?]; while, as a model, without pictures: Henri Dugard, *Histoire de la Guerre contre les Turcs (1912-1913)* Paris: Les Marches de l'Est, 1913.

²⁴ Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of the Imagination* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

²⁵ An interesting contemporary evaluation by Spanish university professor: Joaquín Fernández Prida, *Conflictos internacionales del siglo XIX* (Barcelona: Juan Gili, 1901), 123-127.

Gladstone in 1885). Originally a federalist republican, Almirall became a relative "accidental" or opportunist in the name of "Catalan particularism", although his heart remained firmly anti-dynastic.²⁶

Almirall's opponents within the national movement in the 1880s (like the playwright Angel Guimerà, 1845-1924), on the contrary, soon saw the Austro-Hungarian compromise of 1867 and a "Dual Monarchy" as a reasonable model for their hopes and dreams.²⁷ In 1888, at the Barcelona World's Fair, a vague but pointed proposal was handed to the Queen-Regent, a Habsburg. In 1892, a newly created pressure group, the *Unió Catalanista* (Catalanist Union), drew up a dualist constitution for Catalonia in relation to Spain, with dualism always seen from the Magyar side, and with scant attention to the Hungarian argument that the Apostolic Crown was itself dual with Croatia-Slavonia.²⁸ But the *Unió* did not believe in electoral politics.²⁹

In March 1897, to voice their support for the Greek national cause, the more pragmatic and younger members of the *Unió* around Enric Prat de la Riba (1870-1917) wrote a "Message to H.M. George, King of the Hellenes", which they noisily presented to the Greek consul in Barcelona. So, in the Catalan metropolis, the "Eastern Question" was

²⁶ In general, on Almirall: Josep Maria Figueres, *Valentí Almirall, forjador del catalanisme polític* Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1990; and Josep Pich i Mitjana, *Federalisme i catalanisme: Valentí Almirall i Llozer (1841-1904)* Vic: Eumo, 2004; on the party platform: also by Pich, *El Centre Català: la primera associació política catalanista, 1882-1894* Catarroja: Afers, 2002; on the newspaper: Figueres, *Diari Català: plataforma d'exposició ideològica i d'activisme del catalanisme polític* Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2005; and Pich, *Almirall i el Diari Català, 1879-1881: l'inici del projecte polític-ideològic del catalanisme progressista* Vic: Eumo, 2003; on the First and Second Catalanist Congresses: Figueres, *El Primer Congrés Catalanista i Valentí Almirall: materials per a l'estudi dels orígens del catalanisme* Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 2004; Maria Carme Illa i Munné, *El Segon Congrés Catalanista: un congrés inacabat* Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1983.

²⁷ Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, *El imperialismo catalán. Prat de la Riba, Cambó, D'Ors y la conquista moral de España* Barcelona: Edhasa, 2003. On Almirall's nationalist enemies: Jordi Llorens i Vila, *La Lliga de Catalunya i el Centre Escolar Catalanista: dues associacions del primer catalanisme* Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 1996.

²⁸ Josep Termes and Agustí Colomines, *Les Bases de Manresa de 1892 i els orígens del catalanisme* Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya, 1992; Joan Lluís Pérez Francesch, *Les Bases de Manresa i el programa polític de la Unió Catalanista: 1871-1899* Manresa: Fundació Caixa de Manresa, 1992.

²⁹ Jordi Llorens i Vila, *La Unió Catalanista i els orígens del catalanisme polític: dels orígens a la presidència del Dr. Martí i Julià: 1891-1903* Barcelona: Abadia de Montserrat, 1992.

never far away.³⁰ By 1899, this group, with a dual monarchy always in mind (or a monarchical federation like the German Empire as understood by Bavarian jurists), established a daily newspaper, *La Veu de Catalunya* (The Voice of Catalonia), which clearly took off as a successful journalistic venture. They then set up a Lliga Regionalista (Regionalist League), and succeeded spectacularly in getting a quartet of deputies for Barcelona voted in with the May 1901 legislative elections.³¹

It should be stressed that this is a summary description, one that therefore tends to overemphasize the role of electoral parties, which were operating in a liberal political system, endowed also with elected provincial assemblies.³² Our narration perhaps does not sufficiently stress the *variety of sensibilities that co-existed within what was called locally "Catalanism", a self-explanatory and catch-all term* that rested on the defense of the Catalan language in public life.³³ Rural landowners and lawyers, well-to-do peasants, urban professionals (notably physicians) and businessmen, manufacturers with in general smallish factories, shop-owners, journalists and white-collar workers recently arrived from the countryside, all played diverse notes (from leftists and republicans, or progressive liberals, to diehard Catholics, romantic conservatives, or open reactionaries) within what was a complex, sometimes contradictory chorus of nationalist themes.³⁴ In Catalan politics, before but especially after 1901, there was a clear left and right, republicans opposed monarchists, anti-clericals and Catholics mutually

³⁰ The question of foreign examples for Catalan nationalism was first explored in: Jordi Llorens i Vila, *Catalanisme i moviments nacionalistes contemporanis (1885-1901): Missatges a Irlanda, Creta i Finlàndia* Barcelona: Rafael Dalmau, 1989; Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, "'El Mirall de Catalunya': models internacionals en el desenvolupament del nacionalisme i del separatisme català, 1875-1923", *Estudios de Historia Social*, n. 28-29, I.VI.(1984): 213-219.

³¹ On the Lliga Regionalista, see Borja de Riquer, *Lliga Regionalista: la burgesia catalana i el nacionalisme, 1898-1904* Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1977; also Charles E. Ehrlich, *Lliga Regionalista, Lliga Catalana, 1901-1936* Barcelona: Institut Cambó, Alpha, 2004.

³² Isidre Molas, *Lliga Catalana. Un estudi d'estasiologia* Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1972, 2 vols.

³³ As an indication on the importance of linguistic militancy: Josep Grau, *La Lliga Regionalista i la llengua catalana, 1901-1924* Barcelona: Publicacions de l'Abadia de Montserrat, 2006.

³⁴ For an easily accessible attempt at a synthesis in a nationalist perspective, see: Josep Termes and Agustí Colomines, *Patriotes i resistents: història del primer catalanisme* Barcelona: Base, 2003.

loathed each other, while still retaining a common linguistic tie –distinct from the Spanish language– despite the visible social tensions of a rapidly expanding metropolis, with a burgeoning industrial base, and a still prosperous agrarian production, all oriented primarily towards the Spanish “national” market.³⁵

Macedonia in the Catalan nationalist press

The first reference about Macedonia in the Catalan nationalist press appeared by the end of August 1901, and referred to Supremist leader Boris Sarafov. *La Veu de Catalunya* remarked the existence of a “Macedonian Committee [the Macedonian Supreme Committee]”, stressing that its aim was to “gain the independence of the ancient Macedonia, today nearly disappeared in the maps”. Sarafov –leader of the pro-Bulgarian Macedonian revolutionary group- was depicted as an unscrupulous conspirator willing to obtain money for his cause from a not very enthusiastic population. *La Veu* stressed that those inhabitants of Macedonia who did not favour the Committee found themselves between Sarafov and the Ottoman rulers. The newspaper pointed out that Bulgaria was favouring the Committee and after explaining that Sarafov was in trial accused of various assassinations in Rumania, stated that Bulgarian public opinion saw him as a martyr despite the fact that anywhere else he would be seen “perhaps as a vulgar criminal”.³⁶

After a year with no references, in spring 1902, *La Veu de Catalunya* looked again towards Macedonia depicting the Turks “as masters in elementary diplomacy” (like everybody else except those so described, the *La Veu de Catalunya* used “Turks” and “Ottomans” indistinctly). *La Veu* argued that when the Ottoman Empire had to confront a province that was not under any Great Power protection, the Sublime Porte felt free to use its army, as well as its notorious irregular forces. But, in the Macedonian case, given Austrian, Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian interests, the Sultan Abdul Hamid II presented himself as the victim of the banditry of the Macedonian Committee in Sofia. According to the newspaper, Sarafov’s activities were putting into trouble both Muslims and Christians. Thus, pursuing its aim to “Bulgarise the Macedonian population, the Committee usually excites rivalries between Serbs, Montenegrins, Turks from the opposition, Greeks and other groups in

³⁵ Klaus-Jürgen Nagel, *Arbeiterschaft und nationale Frage in Katalonien zwischen 1898 und 1923* Saarbrücken: Breitenbach, 1991.

³⁶ “El comité Macedónich”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, August 21, 1901, 4.

Macedonia". The Sultan, therefore, was able to use the disputes among them to face Serbian and Bulgarian demands, "the ones that he most fears".³⁷

In order to elaborate the news, *La Veu* compiled dispatches from Paris, Vienna and London agencies, and (using press gazettes) from the newspapers of these countries, as well as Russia and Germany. As the interest for the "Macedonian Question" grew in the European press, so did in *La Veu*.³⁸ Between June 1899 and October 1902, the Second Boer War had been the central theme in the international pages of the Catalanist daily.³⁹ But, from February 1903 onwards, Macedonia took its place. Mainly through brief dispatches, put in a column titled "*La qüestió de Macedònia*", the reader of the Lliga's newspaper was informed every two or three days about the latest movements in the Balkans.

From February to June 1903, the information published in *La Veu* was clearly confusing. The paper was disoriented by following details telegraphed by news agencies in the European capitals: as rumor mixed with fact, it was easy to read that in London it was said that Greeks aimed to help the Sultan against the revolutionaries, while from Vienna it was argued that Bulgaria pursued only pacific aims. In any case, the Great Powers, invoking the Berlin congress agreements, expected that the Sultan would undertake reforms in Macedonia to calm down the situation.⁴⁰ As *La Veu* also compiled stories appearing in the international press, the Barcelona newspaper published a report of the Balkans correspondent of the *Daily News* in London who argued that in Macedonia there was an independent committee from the one established in Sofia, which was not exactly untrue, but the reporter added that the inner committee had been preparing a revolution during the last twenty-five years "a very well organised secret society and stronger than Europeans could imagine".⁴¹

³⁷ "La política als Balkans", *La Veu de Catalunya*, May 7, 1902, 1.

³⁸ Ryan Gingeras, "Between the Cracks: Macedonia and the 'Mental Map' of Europe, *Canadian Slavonic Papers/Revue canadienne des slavistes*, L, 3-4, (September-December 2008), 34-358.

³⁹ As an example, "La conferència de Bloenfontein", *La Veu de Catalunya*, June 14, 1899, 1-2; "Els generals boers", *Id.*, October 23, 1902, 3.

⁴⁰ "La qüestió de Macedònia", *La Veu de Catalunya*, February 15, 1903, 3; *Id.*, February 16, 1903, 3.

⁴¹ "De Macedònia", *La Veu de Catalunya*, February 18, 1903, 3.

Of course, there was no journalist in *La Veu* with the job of writing up events in a consistent way beyond printing translations of international dispatches. There was no money for such niceties. Only a few major papers had such resources, and there was much venality: Paris papers, for example, were notoriously corrupt. *La Veu* recognised that what arrived was contradictory because the reports on the ground – which depended on the efforts of stringers rather than specially sent correspondents– were overshadowed by the interested information given out by the foreign ministries of both the Great Powers and local capitals. Furthermore, dispatches from Belgrade, Sofia or Constantinople were reproduced after being filtered by the European agencies, all of which served as the starting point for the rise of intelligence services, precisely around the turn of the century. The Catalan newspaper, therefore, could inform of “contradictory dispatches from Belgrade”, because while some sources argued about the necessity of an uprising some others informed about a delay in the insurrection by the end of summer.⁴²

During the spring of 1903, *La Veu* reported the existence of Christian armed units prepared to face the Turkish police “which steals storages and puts the inhabitants facing the dilemma of choosing starvation or joining the insurgency”. It published also that many Christians had been sent to prison “because they read the Bulgarian press” and even that “Turkish rulers spread terror through Christian population and that Bulgarian army is ready to intervene”. Above all *La Veu* presumed the possibility that something was about to happen. Nevertheless, at the same time it seemed that the Catalan newspaper was confident in the adoption of an agreed solution among the Great Powers and the Sultan which would overcome over the Macedonian region’s growing instability.⁴³

By the end of March, *La Veu* informed about the possibility of the outbreak of a general uprising following rumours in Vienna, because “the Ottoman rulers have no mercy towards the Christians in Macedonia”. And according to that many Macedonian Christians returned from the neighbour states to their country in order to take part in the imminent uprising.⁴⁴ A month later, considering that “in the

⁴² “La qüestió macedònica”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, February 25, 1903, 3; *Id.*, February 27, 1903, 3.

⁴³ “La qüestió Macedònica”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, March 4, 1903, 3; *Id.*, March 6, 1903, 5; *Id.*, March 9, 1903, 3.

⁴⁴ “La qüestió Macedònica”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, March 22, 1903, 3; *Id.*, March 23, 1903, 3.

surroundings of Salonica many of its Christian villages had been burnt and its inhabitants cruelly tortured”, *La Veu* assumed the beginning of the uprising was close. Furthermore, in Sofia it was said that “Muslims pursued a policy of massacring of Bulgarians” and a dispatch from Vienna explained that in Salonica “the Turkish troops had arrested all the Bulgarians in Macedonia and most of them are killed with the bayonets before entering the prison”. The newspaper of the Lliga on May 13 stated that there was no official confirmation regarding the death of Gotse Delchev (1872-1903), one of the key Macedonian revolutionary leaders, who in fact was killed in a skirmish with Ottoman troops.⁴⁵

Finally, by June 9, *La Veu* described “the Balkans question as a calm period which precedes a tempest”. Even though this pessimistic article had no author, it was the first time that a serious attempt to analyse the situation was made from Barcelona. *La Veu* argued that Bulgaria was willing to be conciliatory but the Porte demanded a gesture of public submission from Sofia. This was, however, it added, an impossible measure, because even if the Bulgarian government acceded, public opinion and the army would be against such a demeaning act. In the view of the Catalan newspaper, a war would benefit the Macedonians because this would inevitably lead to a general confrontation –in fact, that is what Macedonian revolutionaries expected. All in all, *La Veu* stated, “Macedonians saw no other solution but gaining an autonomy with the Great Powers guarantee”.⁴⁶

From mid-June and almost for a month, the regicide in Belgrade during the early morning of June 11 focused all the attention about the

⁴⁵ “La qüestió Macedònica”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, April 16, 1903, n.1522, 5; *Id.*, April 20, 1903, 3; “Als Balkans”, *Id.*, May 13, 1903, 3. On Delchev, see Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, “Yane Sandanski as a political leader in Macedonia in the era of the Young Turks”, *Cahiers balkaniques* 40 (2012) [on-line <http://ceb.revues.org/1192>]; with more purple prose: Mercia MacDermott, *Freedom or Death. The Life of Gotsé Delchev*, London & West Nyack: The Journeyman Press, 1978, consulted on <http://www.promacedonia.org/en/mm_gd/index.htm>. See also, Hristo Andonov Poljanski, *Goce Delcev. His Life and Times*, Skopje, Mislra, 1973; Иванка Анастасова, Дивна Симиќ, Македонска историографија за Македонската револуционерна организација (ВМРО) и Илинденското востание: библиографски прилог, Институт за национална историја, Скопје, 1993 [Ivanka Anastasova, Divna Simić, *Macedonian Historiography of The Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (VMRO) and Ilinden Uprising*, Bibliographic Contribution, Skopje: Institute of National History, 1993.

⁴⁶ “La qüestió macedònica”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, June 9, 1903, 1; “Atrocitats turcas”, *Id.*, June 12, 1903, 2.

news arriving from the Balkans. The assassination of Serbian King Alexander I Obrenović and his wife, Queen Draga, by a group of army officers, carried out in a brutal manner, shocked all the European monarchies. The Lliga Regionalista, which supported monarchical stability in Spain, was no exception. *La Veu* even pointed out that the Bulgarian Government was watchful of any unusual measures taken by army officers who might not favour official passivity towards the policies of Ottoman authorities.⁴⁷

At the same time, in June 1903 there reappeared in Barcelona the *Il·lustració Catalana*, which, founded in 1880, had been the first graphic magazine published in Catalan, in imitation of the famous Parisian weekly *L'Illustration*. Francesc Matheu (1851-1938), a conservative Catalanist, was the director of this Modern-style, bourgeoisie-oriented publication. Although the *Il·lustració* was an independent magazine, Matheu was closely linked to the Unió Catalanista, sharing its political ideology. The *Il·lustració* was a bimonthly magazine, which usually devoted its opening pages to international affairs.⁴⁸

Wifred (or Wilfred) Coroleu (1877-1951) was the author of the articles, under the heading *Crònica* (Chronicle). He was the son of the renowned lawyer, historian and journalist, Josep Coroleu (1839-1895), considered one of the pioneering Catalanists.⁴⁹ Then a twenty-six year old Catalan psychiatrist, Wifred would become the titular doctor at the insane asylum of the Santa Creu Hospital in Barcelona the following year. Afterwards he would work for the Barcelona City Council and, from 1916 to 1935, would be the secretary of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Catalonia. Throughout his career, doctor Coroleu wrote many works and articles on psychiatry, especially using ethnographic

⁴⁷ “Lo de Servia”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, June 13, 1903, 1; “L’escena del regicide”, *Id.*, June 14, 1903, 1; “La nit tràgica al Konak”, *Id.*, June 15, 1903, 2; “El sultà”, *Id.*, June 16, 1903, 2; “El rey de Servia”, *Id.*, June 22, 1903, 1; “Lo dels Balkans”, *Id.*, July 6, 1903, 1

⁴⁸ Joan Torrent and Rafael Tasis Marca, *Història de la premsa catalana*, vol.II (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1966), 377-380; Maria Martí, *Francesc Matheu i la revista Catalana: l’oposició a la normativització del català (1918-1926)* (Barcelona: Publicacions de l’Abadia de Montserrat, 2007), 9-23; Margarida Casacuberta, “Francesc Matheu i la tradició de l’antiintel·lectualisme a Catalunya” in Ramon Panyella, (ed.), *La projecció social de l’escriptor en la literatura catalana contemporània* (Barcelona: Punctum, Grup d’Estudis de Literatura Catalana Contemporània de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2007), 233-243.

⁴⁹ Giovanni C. Cattini, *Historiografia i catalanisme. Josep Coroleu i Inglada (1839-1895)* Catarroja: Afers, 2007.

examples so as to best discuss the behaviour of religious fanatics in terms of psychopathology.

Doctor Coroleu was a devoted Catholic and like most of his colleagues believed that the causes of mental illness were environmental.⁵⁰ Therefore, with his profession and familiar background it appears clear why Wifred Coroleu was attracted by tracing connections between culture and society, on the one hand, and medicine and psychiatry, on the other. In addition, medical doctors in general and psychiatrists in particular were strongly attracted to the Catalan nationalist movement in its many organizations.⁵¹ The *Unió Catalanista* itself was presided during 1903-1916 by another psychiatrist, Doctor Domènec Martí i Julià (1861-1917), who, besides his theoretical production, was distinguished enough as a specialist to preside the Barcelona Society of Psychiatry and Neurology.⁵²

At the beginning of the 1900s, it was easy to find articles of Coroleu related to international affairs in the *Il·lustració Catalana* but also in *La Vanguardia* and *La Veu de Catalunya*, among other publications. He wrote in both Catalan and Spanish. Thus, by mid-June 1903, Coroleu began to write about the “Macedonian Question” in the *Il·lustració*. In his first report, the psychiatrist claimed “the population of Macedonia was terrorised and after losing their harvest, with no credit, punished by the Turkish brutality and oppressed by the nationalist committees, it can only look towards its sister, Bulgaria, in demand for help”. Coroleu argued Bulgaria was indeed helping Macedonia because its government had sent Grigor Nachovich as a diplomatic representative to Constantinople in order to intercede in succour of the oppressed Christians. The doctor’s approach resembled the first news report published in *La Veu* in 1901, which depicted the inhabitants of Macedonia as caught in the middle of an undesired battle.⁵³

Coroleu favoured Bulgaria: “a little nation, defendant of the oppressed in Macedonia like the Greeks helping the Candia patriots in 1897”. He thus established a parallel between Macedonia and Crete, one

⁵⁰ Josep M. Comelles, “Forgotten paths: culture and ethnicity in Catalan mental health policies (1900-39)”, *History of Psychiatry*, 21, 4, (2010), 1-18

⁵¹ Josep M. Calbet i Camarasa and Daniel Montanyà i Buchaca, *Metges i farmaceutics catalanistes (1880-1906)* Valls: Cossetania, 2001.

⁵² The best synthesis of Dr. Martí’s life and works is the introduction by Jaume Colomer to D. Martí i Julià, *Per Catalunya i altres textos* Barcelona: La Magrana, Diputació de Barcelona, 1985.

⁵³ Wifred Coroleu, “Crònica”, *Il·lustració Catalana*, June 14, 1903, n.2, 1.

of the national struggles that most interested the Catalanists, as after the revolt, in 1898, the island gained autonomy under Ottoman rule. But, above all, the psychiatrist condemned the “destruction of helpless villages and the slaughter of old people and children” and deplored the “bloody revenge of the Sultan against the Christians”. While he was not very confident on the European demands because, in his view, “the Christian emperor par excellence [Kaiser Wilhelm II]” was covering the Ottoman ruler. And he also reminded his readers of the Moslem massacres of Armenians “for no other reason than being Christians”.⁵⁴

The Ilinden uprising: between Autonomy and the Crusades

The revolt began in Bitola (Monastir), in the Monastir vilayet, on August 2nd. During the following days the revolution spread throughout the Kruševo, Smilevo, Ohrid, Demir-Hisar, Prespa and Kastoria regions, in the southwest of Macedonia and the eastern Thrace region. The insurgents took control of many villages. In some cases, local populations helped them and even fled into the mountains, while others remained, feeling that it was not necessary to abandon their homes, as they were not helping the rebels. Due to Macedonian *multi-ethnicity*, the views towards the uprising were diverse. In other parts of Macedonia, such as Skopje, Kičevo, Razlog or Florina the revolts were far less intense.

La Veu announced the beginning of the Ilinden uprising on August 9th and from then on informed about the developments in Macedonia almost every day. Despite other rebels named, the Catalan newspaper depicted Supremist leader Boris Sarafov as the leader of the revolt. Following the news and dispatches compiled from the European agencies and newspapers, the publication constantly stressed “atrocities” carried out by the Turkish irregulars, the *bashi-bozouks*, already infamous for the “Bulgarian horrors” in 1876, which had been denounced in their day by such leading French and British intellectuals and politicians as Victor Hugo or Gladstone. Similarly, the destruction of villages and churches was also stressed. *La Veu* assured that, for instance, “boys and girls between eight and fourteen years have been horrendously tortured and killed, while harvests have been burned and peasants have to flee to Bulgaria, while the young elements join the insurgents”.⁵⁵ Usually, *La*

⁵⁴ Wifred Coroleu, “Crònica”, *Il·lustració Catalana*, July 19, 1903, n.7, 2.

⁵⁵ “La qüestió macedònica”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, August 9, 1903, n.1632, 2.

Veü depicted the insurgents as courageous men fighting a disproportionate and cruel enemy.⁵⁶

A cold eye should indicate that crimes were also committed against “Turks”, then and later.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it is difficult to find in *La Veü* any complaint against brutality towards Muslims. And when such information was given, the newspaper tended to justify such actions or brush them away.⁵⁸ Beyond its slant towards Christian’s nationalists, *La Veü* significantly did not mention the proclamation of the “Kruševo Republic” on August 4, which survived as a local administration for just over a week under the leadership of socialist school teacher Nikola Karev (1877-1905). Such ideological forgetfulness might be due to a certain conservative Lliga distaste for the communalist dream of self-government expressed by Karev’s “Republic” (or in the similar “Strandzha Republic” briefly set up in Vassiliko a few days later). However, it also seems reasonable to suggest that the relatively high amount of information being collated in Barcelona was extremely difficult to decode.⁵⁹

By mid-August, *La Veü* carried the first signed article about the conflict. The author was Remigi Juncà (1883-1936), a twenty-one year old university student in his last year of Medical studies. Born in Barcelona, he was a Catholic and a member of the *Lliga Regionalista*. By 1910, already a doctor, he was offered a job at the Chilean Navy. After his return five years later, he took up private practice on the outskirts of Barcelona while, as a Catalan nationalist, he radicalised his ideas in favour of leftist-separatism.⁶⁰

In August 1903, Juncà begun his article in *La Veü* stating that those who had forgotten the ancient history might be surprised by Macedonian efforts “to re-conquer their nationality”, but he reminded his readers that “Macedonia had once ruled over most part of the Balkans and the Old Continent”. After a brief description of Macedonian prehistoric times,

⁵⁶ “L’insurrecció macedònica”, *La Veü de Catalunya*, August 13, 1903, n.1636, 2.

⁵⁷ Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* Princeton: Darwin, 1995.

⁵⁸ “L’insurrecció macedònica”, *La Veü de Catalunya*, August 10, 1903, n.1633, 2.

⁵⁹ Keith Brown, *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003.

⁶⁰ Josep M. Calbet, Carles Hervás and Lluís Guerrero, “Metges de Catalunya morts durant la Guerra Civil i la repressió franquista; resultats preliminars”, *Gimbernat*, 50, (2008), 109-118; Xavier Pons, *Els anys del Dr. Remigi Juncà. Cubelles (1926-1936)*. *Notes de la República* Cubelles: Ajuntament de Cubelles, 1997.

Juncà paid attention to the extraordinary achievements of Alexander the Great. The medical student used Alexander's conquests as a contrast to the creation of the Spanish Empire. Thus, he argued: "unlike what Spain did in America, History renders justice to those great men who did not oppress conquered populations. [...] [Alexander and the Macedonians] tried to show affection for them, improving their administration and giving relevance to their own personalities".

Further along, Juncà explained the end of the Macedonian Empire and how it came under the rule of Rome, and finally was turned into an Ottoman province. The young Catalan nationalist added that the Turks were anti-Christians and, therefore, "as the majority of Macedonians are Christians they could not remain indifferent to the profanation of churches". And, following the mainstream, Juncà claimed that European nations were doing nothing while Ottomans kept killing and torturing children and women. "Turkey promised reforms" –Juncà mourned– "in the same way that Spain promised reforms as well, but these never arrive and when they do it is too late". Therefore, in his view, "Macedonians with the courage that rises from desperation fight an heroic battle for liberty against tyranny, justice against evil, following the claims 'Macedonia for the Macedonians'".⁶¹ The reply of the Sublime Porte to the threat was certainly harsh: by mid-August, the Sultan, determined to put down the rebellion, sent more than 150.000 infantrymen, 3.500 cavalrymen and artillery to defeat the insurgents, all in addition to the 150.000 troops already in the area.

During the second half of the month, *La Veu* kept describing the "atrocities of the Ottoman troops". Furthermore, the Catalan newspaper pointed out that "the Turks had killed teachers, Greeks, Bulgarians and even foreigners". And, it was also mentioned that rebels had burned some houses and villages, although their warfare activity was not described in depth.⁶² Even Sarafov, reported *La Veu*, had claimed that he had been unfairly accused of plundering villages. Otherwise, the newspaper informed that any of the Great Powers was not going to intervene in the conflict and "the rebels never had until now a separatist aim".⁶³

⁶¹ Remigi Juncà, "La qüestió macedònica", *La Veu de Catalunya*, August 17, 1903, 1.

⁶² "De Macedònia", *La Veu de Catalunya*, August 19, 1903, 3; "Turchs y Macedonis", *Id.*, August 22, 1903, 2; "La qüestió macedònica", *Id.*, August 24, 1903, 2; "De Turquia", *Id.*, August 25, 1903, 2.

⁶³ "La qüestió macedònica", *La Veu de Catalunya*, August 27, 1903, n.1650, 2; "La qüestió macedònica", *Id.*, August 29, 1903, 2; "La qüestió macedònica", *Id.*, August

The Ottoman troops restored their control over the majority of the revolted areas, by beginning of September, despite there were reported skirmishes until October. As Delchev and others had argued, the organized Macedonian revolutionaries were not ready to lead a successful revolt. They lacked financial support and arms. The uprising had no diplomatic allies; Greece and Serbia did not help the rebels and Bulgaria following its political interests, at least officially, feared putting its own autonomy at stake. Nor were the Great Powers disposed to risk property and areas of influence in the Balkans. Aware of Turkish custom of revenge, most of the inhabitants of Macedonia were afraid of being involved openly in the uprising. Thus, the Macedonian revolutionary insurgents fought alone against a far more prepared army. Data concerning destruction and death varies depending on the sources, but between 7000 and 8000 men, women and children died, some 5000 women were raped, and about 200 villages were burnt down.⁶⁴

Finally, following a dispatch from Vienna, on September 8th, the Catalan newspaper announced that the uprising had ended, although no analysis in depth was offered.⁶⁵ During the following days, *La Veu* informed about the aftermath of the uprising. It explained that many people had been murdered, convents had been burned and foreign correspondents had been expelled “so we will only have the exaggerated versions of Turkish and Insurgents”.⁶⁶ The *Lliga* newspaper also published two maps: the first one of the Monastir district, “the part of Macedonia where the rebellion against the Turkish cruelties has been

30, 1903, 2; “La qüestió macedònica”, *Id.*, August 31, 1903, 2; “La qüestió macedònica”, *Id.*, September 1, 1903, 2.

⁶⁴ For standard figures, see the account of the German-Jewish-Czech publicist, Franz Carl Weiskopf (who used several pseudonyms, such as Peter Buk or F.W.L. Kovacs), a prolific writer of Marxist sympathies, in his description of Macedonia as a “forlorn land” during World War II: Frederick W.L. Kovacs [sic], *The Untamed Balkans* (London: Robert Hale Ltd., 1942), 44-45; higher –and more gruesome descriptions– in the account of French political journalist Henri Pozzi (1879-1946): H. Pozzi, *La guerre revient...* (Paris: Editions Paul Berger, 1933), 216.

⁶⁵ “La qüestió macedònica”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, September 4, 1903, 2; *Id.*, September 5, 1903, 3; *Id.*, September 6, 1903, 1; *Id.*, September 7, 1903, 2; *Id.*, September 8, 1903, 2.

⁶⁶ “La qüestió macedònica”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, September 10, 1903, 2; *Id.*, September 11, 1903, 2; September 12, 1903, 2; *Id.*, September 13, 1903, n.1667, 2; *Id.*, September 14, 1903, 2; September 16, 1903, 3; *Id.*, September 18, 1903, 1; *Id.*, September 19, 1903, 2; *Id.*, September 20, 1903, 2.

most fierce”,⁶⁷ and the second one of the provinces of Macedonia “destroyed by the war between Turks and Christians”. As *La Veu* put it, observing the latter map, it was easy to understand that Serbia and Bulgaria had similar interests in Macedonia. Therefore, if a war broke out between Bulgaria and the Turks, Serbia would intervene “as already occurred [against the British Empire] in the Transvaal and Orange [Free State]”.⁶⁸

October began with the demands of the insurgents, according to *La Veu*. They demanded something akin to Crete: full autonomy with equal rights for everyone, including Macedonians, a European Christian governor under international supervision, that Turkish officials be withdrawn, and, to avoid tensions, a new public education system.⁶⁹ On October 10th, the last reference to the aftermath of the Ilinden uprising appeared in the main Catalan newspaper. *La Veu* didn’t offer any interpretation of the consequences. As so often happens in news media, the “Macedonian Question” simply faded, and interest on the international scene would be focused on the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).⁷⁰

Meanwhile, however, Coroleu described in *Il·lustració Catalana* the situation in Macedonia “as scenes of terror that return us to the Crusades”. Coroleu emphasized that Abdul Hamid was a known liar, and that, with the help of Germany, he would achieve the disarmament of Bulgaria; then the bloody –“Red Sultan” would renew his customary atrocities against the Christians in Armenia and Macedonia.⁷¹ Once again, Coroleu compared the situation in Macedonia –and the Bulgarian ascendancy there– with the autonomy of Crete, and the aid granted by Greece. The psychiatrist justified the uprising because “the insurgents do not have any other option than using dynamite and threatening pacific

⁶⁷ “Mapa de Monastir”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, September 16, 1903, 1.

⁶⁸ “Mapa general del teatre de la guerra”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, September 26, 1903, 2.

⁶⁹ “La qüestió macedònica”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, September 27, 1903, 2; *Id.*, September 30, 1903, 2; *Id.*, October 2, 1903, 2; *Id.*, October 7, 1903, 2; *Id.*, October 7, 1903, 2; *Id.*, October 8, 1903, 3; *Id.*, October 10, 1903, 2.

⁷⁰ As an example, ‘Conflicte rus-japonès’, *La Veu de Catalunya*, October 5, 1903, 2; ‘Las forsas russo japonesas’, *Id.*, January 4, 1904, 2.

⁷¹ As an indication, see: Alexis Marcoff, *Abd-ul Hamid: el sultán sanguinario (1842-1918)* Barcelona: Juventud, 1943. Marcoff was a White Russian émigré who resided in Barcelona from the 1920s on.

Muslims”, and argued that “a bad self-government is always better than foreign oppression”.⁷²

Coroleu asked: “why does this unhappy province have to be less than Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Crete?” The medical student advocated the intervention of the Great Powers. He tried to make clear that otherwise the fate of Macedonia would be similar to that of Ireland “a century ago”, and to the current fate of the Transvaal, where “despite the clear sympathies of the civilised world towards Boers”, the Afrikaners fought alone against the mighty British Empire. He concluded, stressing the obvious, that if “some nations like Belgium, Italy, and Hungary have become independent of legendary tyrannies, it is due to their own effort or to the help of other powers”.⁷³ Coroleu wrote three more articles about Macedonia in *Il·lustració Catalana* from mid-October to mid-December, repeating the same topics.⁷⁴

After half a year without any reference to the “Macedonian Question”, once again Coroleu published, now in *La Veu de Catalunya*, a balance regarding the tragic Ilinden uprising. By the end of April 1904, the psychiatrist wrote: “the Bulgarians had been able to face down the Turks” but that “had not brought the peace to Macedonians”. Coroleu went once again over “the tortures, the arbitrary imposition of taxes, the obliged conversion to Islam and the rapes, among other punishments, mainly suffered by the Christian population”.

In Coroleu’s view, neither the Serbs nor the Greeks were ready to help the Macedonian insurgents because they feared the “Greater Bulgaria”. Furthermore, religious hatred had also poisoned their political relationship. Thus, according to him, “Greek and Serbian Patriarchates fought against the Bulgarian Exarchate forgetting their common antipathy towards the Turks”. Coroleu also argued that the European press sometimes helped the Ottoman rulers in spreading their lies while innocent people were dying. He felt ashamed about such smears, and considered that “the insurgents were described as savages who only deserved to be impaled, while they were only fighting to obtain the most elemental right: respect for their lives”.⁷⁵

⁷² Wifred Coroleu, “Crònica”, *Il·lustració Catalana*, September 13, 1903, n.15, 2; *Id.*, September 20, 1903, n.16, 1-2.

⁷³ Wifred Coroleu, “Crònica”, *Il·lustració Catalana*, October 4, 1903, n.18, 3-4.

⁷⁴ Wifred Coroleu, “Crònica”, *Il·lustració Catalana*, October 18, 1903, n.20, 2; *Id.*, November 22, 1903, n.25, 2; December 13, 1903, n.28, 1.

⁷⁵ Wifred Coroleu, “Bulgària i Macedònia”, *La Veu de Catalunya*, April 24, 1904, 2.

Earlier, in 1902, Muslim Albanian attacks on Christians had already led the Austrian and Russian ambassadors at Constantinople to jointly address the Porte with what was termed a “February Program” to resolve the Macedonian situation, which was considered by the powers as steadily worsening. As Abdul Hamid dawdled, after a pro-forma agreement, events were overtaken by the Saint Elya revolt and its consequences. Ottoman repression led to a meeting of Kaiser Franz Josef and Tsar Nicholas II at Mürzsteg, a small resort town in Styria, and to a “Punctuation” or accord, which was presented to the British in late October 1903, and thence to the Porte. Civilian representatives of the two implicated powers would supervise the situation, the police would be remodelled, while the Ottomans would facilitate the return of Christian refugees and offer them due compensation. Accordingly, Coroleu explained (with an occasional slip) how the Sultan had agreed in November 1903 to the Mürzsteg Reform Program, a compromise between Austria-Hungary and Russia that in practice split control over Macedonia between the three powers through “civil agents”. An Italian general, now named Pasha, Emilio De Giorgis, assisted by 25 officers from the Great Powers, was appointed to supervise the reorganization of the Turkish provincial *gendarmerie*, which now was laid open to recruitment among the Christian population: the territory was divided into five zones of influence Skoplje (Uskub) for the Austro-hungarians, Monastir (Bitola) for the Italians, Salonica for the Russians, Seres to the French, Drama to the British, while the Germans had to content themselves with the control of the directorate of the Gendarmerie school in Salonica. The Program included also further judiciary and financial reforms but, all in all, however, the whole plan was not carried out. After two months and numerous discussions, the anticipated intervention of the Great Powers to supervise the Ottoman Empire in Macedonia did not take place. The Ilinden uprising had been unsuccessful in the aim to obtain some sort of autonomy with outside backing. In the aftermath, the Macedonian revolutionary organisation was weakened and internally divided.

Despite the failure, in the years to come Macedonian national tradition saw Ilinden as a turning point in the struggle for a national recognition.⁷⁶ In the same way as the Easter Rising in Dublin in 1916

⁷⁶ James Krapfl, “The Ideals of Ilinden: Uses of Memory and Nationalism in Socialist Macedonia” in John S. Migel, (ed.), *State and Nation Building in East Central Europe:*

represented a ‘blood sacrifice’ for Irish nationalists, so the Saint Elyá’s Day revolt of 1903 became a retrospective inflection point for Macedonian nationalists.⁷⁷ By the 1920s, the rise of a Catalan separatist paramilitary party, Estat Català (or “Catalan State”), could think in similar terms. Led from French exile by former Spanish army lieutenant colonel Francesc Macià, Estat Català in late 1926 attempted unsuccessfully to provoke a similar revolt against Spain.⁷⁸ The French police stopped the initiative before anything could happen. But thanks largely to the fame of his non-existent “battle”, which became a staple of the French press for months while the trial was prepared in Paris, Macià was able to achieve Catalan autonomy, with the fall of the Bourbon monarchy in April 1931.⁷⁹

For Catalans in general, a fuller perception of Macedonia perhaps would arrive with the Salonica campaign in the Great War, well covered by a brilliant journalist Agustí Calvet (1887-1964), under his pen-name “Gaziel”, writing in Spanish in the newspaper *La Vanguardia*, that summed up in a relatively understandable way the complex issues that were so hard to follow in a major Western Mediterranean metropolis like Barcelona, comparable to Turin or Milan, from the perspective of an industrial society quite different from that of the Macedonian mountains.⁸⁰

To sum up, Catalonia and Macedonia shared one basic trait in common: in a nineteenth-century world that had enshrined in politics, and consequently in historical justification, the ideal of the Nation-State as something of considerable age and solidity, both nationalisms were

Contemporary Perspectives (New York: Institute on East Central Europe, Columbia University, 1996), 297-316

⁷⁷ William Irwin Thompson, *The Imagination of an Insurrection, Dublin, Easter 1916* New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

⁷⁸ Enric Ucelay-DaCal, *Estat Català: The Strategies of Separation and Revolution of Catalan Radical Nationalism (1919-1933)*, Columbia University Ph.D. dissertation, Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1979.

⁷⁹ With an ironical title: Josep Fontbernat, *La batalla de Prats de Molló* Barcelona: Proa, 1930.

⁸⁰ Gaziel, *De París a Monastir: 1915* Barcelona: Estudio, 1917. “Gaziel” was a Catalan nationalist, but his pro-French stand on the European conflict displeased Prat de la Riba and *La Veu de Catalunya*, while the major Spanish-language daily, *La Vanguardia*, and its director Miquel dels Sants Oliver, welcomed him with enthusiasm. For the classic statement of the Macedonian campaign as decisive to the outcome of the Great War, see: Alan Palmer, *The Gardeners of Salonica. The Macedonian Campaign 1915-1918* [1965] London: Faber & Faber, 2009.

invisible to those who could only see States as significant presences.⁸¹ Furthermore, neither movement had direct understanding of the other: Catalan observers, largely Catholic, asked openly if Macedonian events in 1903 were a religious oppression, Muslim against Christian, and therefore merited one kind of sympathy, or a nationalist experience that, as such, deserved another manner of understanding.

⁸¹ An example might be an Italian Fascist text was so preoccupied with inter-state rivalries that it could simply ignore the whole Ilinden affair: Giorgio Nuriiani, *La Macedonia nel pensiero italiano*, Rome, "Ausonia", 1933. Significantly, as a counter-example, a Croatian right-wing exile with excellent *Falangista* connections in Spain, writing in 1951, began his Spanish-language explanation about "State forms in the Balkans" with an explanation of Croatia, but had no qualms about discussing at length Macedonia, among other examples, as a sub-state nationalist movement: Pedro [sic] Vokuta, *Formas estatales en los Balcanes* Madrid: Sociedad de Estudios Internacionales y Coloniales, 1951.

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CATALAN NATIONALIST PERSPECTIVES ON THE
ILINDEN UPRISING OF 1903

- s u m m a r y -

The paper explores how Catalan nationalism, in Spain, perceived the Ilinden uprising occurred in the summer of 1903 in Macedonia. Through the analysis of opinion articles and related information published in the Catalan press the authors explain the reasons why Macedonia attracted the interest of nationalists at the other end of the Mediterranean. Finally, the paper deals with the Catalan nationalist dilemma of observing and understanding the Macedonian uprising as the result of a religious conflict or, otherwise, as the consequence of an autonomist movement.