

FYROM – A COUNTRY WITH A BORROWED

IDENTITY

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A dispute is going on between Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) on the name "Macedonia," which FYROM is using since 1991 when it broke away from the crumbling state of Yugoslavia. The dispute goes deeper than the use of the name. It is an attempt by FYROM to discredit the ancient Macedonians' ethnicity, break the connection between present-day Greek Macedonians and the Macedonians of antiquity, and establish a connection between FYROM's Slavs and Albanians with ancient Macedonia. The historically, linguistically and archaeologically incorrect challenge is that Macedonia was never part of Greece and the Macedonians were barbarians who spoke a language incomprehensible to the other Greeks.

It is true that ancient Macedonia was not part of Greece before 338 B.C. It is also true that Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Molossia, Epirus, Aetolia, Akarnania and all the other city-states did not belong to Greece because Greece did not exist as a single, united state. The Hellenic nation before the battle of Chaeronia (338 B.C) existed as hundreds of Hellenic tribes, subtribes and families speaking more than 200 dialects of the Greek language (Templar 2003). King Philip II, a leading statesman in the Greek world, was the first who attempted, by conquest or alliances, to unite the Greek city-states into a single country, Greece. Philip organized the "Greek Community" (*to koinon ton Ellenon*) in which the Greek states were bound by oath to keep peace among themselves. "*He [Philip] brought into being the combination of a newly created Greek state, self-standing and self-governing, and a Macedonian state which was unrivaled in military power*" (Hammond, 1997, p. 20).

The name-calling began with the ancient historian Thucydites who called the Macedonians, Epirotes, Aetolians and Akarnanians "barbarians," but he never claimed that they were speaking a language other than Greek. Calling the ancient Macedonians "barbarians" began in Athens as a result of political fabrications based not on ethnicity or language but on the Macedonian way of life (Casson 1971, p. 158) and also because Philip II and Alexander the Great incurred the enmity of the Athenians, specifically Demosthenes, the orator who shamelessly castigated the Macedonians. When the winds of war were approaching from Macedonia, it was natural that some people, especially orators, would call the Macedonians barbarians. The Athenian way of life differed profoundly not only from the Macedonian, but also from the Spartan and from other city-states' way of life. Eugene Borza (1990, p. 5) wrote that "*Only recently have we begun to clarify these muddy waters by realizing the Demosthenes corpus for what it is: oratory designed to sway public opinion in Athens and thereby to formulate public policy. The elusive creature, Truth, is every where subordinate to its expressive servant, Rhetoric.*" Even Badian (1982), an opponent of Macedonia's Hellenism, concluded that the name-calling might have been no more than invective by angry orators unrelated to historical facts.

More than anything else, the language of the Macedonians of antiquity became the subject of strenuous disagreements among scholars, some of whom claim that the Macedonian was incomprehensible to the Greeks of the south. The German historian Gustav Weigand wrote at the end of the nineteenth century and later (1924) that the Macedonian soldiers spoke a language not understood by the other Greeks. The allegation was echoed in modern times by Borza in his 1990 book, *In the Shadow of Olympus, the Emergence of Macedon* (p. 92) who wrote that the written language

was a standard Greek dialect since the middle of the fifth century B.C., with the common people speaking an unknown language or dialect beyond recovery. He also speculated that the common people's dialect was replaced by the

standard *koine* (common) Greek. FYROM's politicians and historians, however, insist that the language of ancient Macedonians is extinct, had no alphabet and it was not Greek. If the Macedonian is extinct, no one would know it was not Hellenic.

During the Greek Dark Ages (the five centuries following the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization), before the reign of the Macedonian King Perdiccas I (ca. 650 B.C.), Macedonia had several Hellenic names (Templar 2003): *Emathia*, after its leader *Emathion* (amathos=sand). Later it was called *Maketia* or *Makessa*, and finally Macedonia. The word "Macedonia" is derived from the very ancient Doric–Aeolic word *macos* (in Attic *mekos*=length) (Homer's *Odyssey* VII.106) and from *Makednos* (=tall), a word found for the first time in the Homeric poems as “o_o _ _ _ _ _ v _ _ _ _ _ o_o” (look at the leaves of tall poplars).

I have spent almost a year looking into the language of ancient Macedonians. The table summarizes the findings:

Opinions of Scholars on the Language of Ancient
Macedonians_____

Muller, K. O. (1825) — Illyrian dialect mixed with Greek

Abel, Otto (1847) — Greek, "Die Makedonen waren Griechen"

Fick, A. (1874) — A northern dialect related to Aeolic Greek and Thessalian

Kretschmer (1896) — A Greek dialect with a few Illyrian and Thracian words

Hoffman, O. (1906) — A northern dialect related to Aeolic Greek and Thessalian

Meillet, A. (1913) — Independent Indo-European close to Greek

Edson, C. F. (1934) — Elementary Greek dialect

Sakellariou, M. (1983) — Greek, with a non-Indo-European influence

Hammond, N. G. (1989) — Aeolic, of the western Greek language

Masson, Olivier (1996) — A north-western Greek, part of the Doric dialects

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Of the ten scholars listed in the table only Muller concluded that the Macedonians spoke an Illyrian dialect mixed with Greek words. The other nine scholars concluded that the Macedonian was a northern dialect related to the Aeolic Greek or a Greek dialect, part of the north-western Doric Greek.

Analyzing the language issue carefully necessitates looking into two important facts related to linguistics and the Macedonians' ethnicity: the existence of hundreds of Hellenic tribes and the lack of linguistic homogeneity — or to put it in a different way, the polyglot forms of the Greek language encountered — among the Greek tribes of antiquity. The Greek language was spoken by more than 250 Hellenic tribes in 200 dialects and idioms indicated by names describing the manner of speaking: *doristi*, *attikisti*, *ionisti*, *lakonisti*, *makedonisti*, etc. (Templar 2003). The great linguistic diversity resulted from the excessive fragmentation of the Greek nation into many city-states (Attica, Lacedaemon, Corinth, etc.) and larger states (Macedonia, Molossia, Aetolia, Thesprotia, etc.). Even today, the Greek language is characterized by inexhaustible capabilities for "mutational" or locally accepted idiomatic transformations. Thomas Cahill, discussing the controversy on the Macedonians' language in his book, *Sailing the Wine-Dark Sea: Why the Greeks Matter* (2003, p. 221), remarked: "I imagine the situation was somewhat parallel to a Scottish movie needing to be distributed with subtitles even in the English speaking world."

Three dialects of the Greek language were best known: Doric, Ionic and Aeolic. Some other well-known dialects were Attic, Cypriot, Arcadic, Aetolic, Akarnanian, Macedonian and Locric.

Livy (*History of Rome*, XXXI, 29) wrote: "The Aetolians, the Akarnanians, the Macedonians, men of the same speech, are united or disunited by trivial causes that arise from time to time" (Templar 2003). According to Hammond (1989, p. 13), the Macedonians spoke an Aeolic dialect of the western Greek language that was later modified by Philip and spread to Asia by Alexander. The Macedonian maintained peculiarities of the Homeric times and preserved features that had disappeared from other Hellenic dialects. That means that the Macedonians were speaking a proto-Hellenic dialect around 800–1,000 B.C. This is also shown by the fact that Roman and Byzantine lexicographers and grammarians used examples from the Macedonian to interpret difficult features of the Homeric poems.

That the Macedonians spoke a Hellenic dialect before the middle of the fifth century is also shown by at least two other facts: (a) There are Greek words in the Macedonian not found in other Greek dialects. If the Macedonians were Hellenized by the middle of the fifth century, as Weigand and Borza insisted, and the Macedonians were already using these words, where did these words come from (Babiniotis 1992)? The following samples found did not exist in other Greek dialects such the Attic; yet, these are Greek words used by the Macedonians before and after the middle of the fifth century: Proper names: Alexander, Alketas, Fillippos, Orestis, Macedon, Ptolemy, Antigonos, Amyntas, Kassandros, Perdikkas, Krateros, Parmenion, Seleucos, etc.(Kalleris 1954, 1992).Toponymia: Aegae, Aliakmon, Almopia, Elimeia, Emathia, Pella, Boion, Lyncestis, etc. (b) The scholar Ulrich Kohler (1897) wrote about cities in Central Macedonia that had been built before the beginning of the fifth century with Greek names not found in other Greek dialects: Atalanti, Eidomenai, Aeani, Europos, Dion, Pydna, etc.

Twenty one years ago, a remarkable inscription on a lead tablet, dated to the fourth century B. C., was excavated in Pella, the ancient Macedonian capital, 40 miles west of Thessaloniki in Greece. The Pella tablet is a curse or magic

spell written by a woman of low social status, as evidenced by her vocabulary. It is written in distinct Doric Greek, suggesting that the Macedonian language was a Doric Greek dialect of the north-western type. Professor Olivier Masson, who examined the tablet, wrote in the third edition of the Oxford Classical Dictionary: "*We may conclude that the Macedonian is a dialect related to North-Western Greek. This view is supported by the recent discovery of a curse tablet which may well be the first 'Macedonian' text attested.*"

To determine the Macedonians' ethnicity, many glossologists take into account both linguistic findings and historical facts. Such historians concluded that the Macedonians were a Hellenic group whose dialect presented unusual linguistic peculiarities (e.g., O. Abel, K. J. Beloch, E. Meyer, G. Glotz, J. B. Bury, U. Wilcken, S. Casson, etc. (Kalleris 1992). These scholars also expressed the view that the so-called Hellenization of the Macedonians may never have occurred in the true meaning of the word (Papavizas 2006, p. 169). The Macedonians, even those before King Perdiccas II (ca. 454–413) were prone to gradually embracing the linguistic refinements that brought their archaic proto-Hellenic dialect to a level close to the Attic, climaxing with the formation of a final product, the *koine* (common), in Philip's and Alexander's time. Nothing like that happened with the non-Hellenic Illyrians, despite their proximity to the Greek world, simply because their tongue had no linguistic affinity to the Hellenic dialects.

The Pella tablet, the findings in the table, 65,000 inscriptions, 200 Macedonian proper names and other artifacts found in Macedonia, all in Doric Greek or Attic, demonstrate that the Macedonians were Greek, with the remarkable findings speaking firmly for the inclusion of ancient Macedonians in the Hellenic family. Even Borza (1990, p. 78), the scholar who expressed doubts on the Macedonians's Hellenism, reluctantly admitted that: "*The 'Macedones' or 'highlanders' of mountainous western Macedonia may have been derived from a northwestern Greek stock. That is, northwestern Greece [Macedonia] provided a pool of Indo-European speakers of*

proto-Greek from which emerged the tribes which later became known by different names as they established their regional identities in separate parts of the country."

In view of the overwhelming historical, archaeological and linguistic evidence amassed through the years, we have arrived at the unacceptable point of history doubting the Hellenism of ancient Macedonians. Worst yet, the international community has arbitrarily shifted the Macedonian ethnicity from modern Hellenic-speaking Macedonians to Slav-speakers who live in a small country 2/3 of which, including Skopje, were not even part of King Philips's historic Macedonia (Map 1, Map 2).

The name "Macedonia" is important because it carries along many important derivatives, far beyond what the name says: history, identity, heritage, culture, heroes, customs, etc. We are speaking about Greek Macedonia with its archaeological sites of an age long gone, the Hellenic Macedonian age: Pella, Aeane, Vergina, Dion, Amphipolis, Methone, Pydna, Olynthos, Appolonia, Philippi, Potidaea, Stagira (Aristotle's birthplace), Thessaloniki. None of these historical city names in Greek Macedonia sound Slavic. Is it really possible that the Macedonians who lived in these Greek cities, spoke a Doric Hellenic dialect, used coins with Greek inscriptions, prayed and sacrificed to the Olympic gods, placed by the other Greeks on Mount Olympus in Macedonia, and who participated in the Olympic Games, where only Greeks were allowed, were not Greek?

The contemporary misleading rhetoric, propaganda and falsification of history disputing the Macedonians' Hellenism, emanating from Skopje — and more acrimoniously from organizations of the Slavic diaspora — cannot be ignored, especially because the unwonted challenge began at the time communism began encroaching into the Balkans with its implacable malice thrust upon the people. Therefore, I must lay considerable stress on international communism being greatly responsible for the revival and perpetuation of the Macedonian controversy since the early 1920s, particularly in

the 1940s, and especially during the Greek Civil War of 1946–1949 (Papavizas 2002, 2006). I must also demonstrate the plundering of Hellenic Macedonia's legacy by the dynamism and the theoretical base of communism, with the Soviet Union looming awesome behind the scenes; to show how the international community has been ensnared in clever political–historical inaccuracies on the Macedonian issue; and to analyze the pivotal role played by Tito's communism in the struggle for Macedonia, especially during the Greek Civil War of 1946–1949. Communism's role did not escape the attention of Ivo Banac, professor of history at Yale, who wrote in 1992: "Only communism could provide the theoretical base and the necessary force to push for a separate "Macedonian' nation."

Virtually from the beginning of communism's encroachment into the Balkans in the early 1920s the Macedonian Question — and the struggle for Macedonia — took on a different meaning and dangerous new dimensions. It all began as a communist–controlled "Macedonian" ethnogenesis on August 1, 1941 with Comintern (Communist International), Stalin's right–hand instrument, dispatching the following directive to Tito and Dimitrov, the communist leaders of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, respectively (from Tsola Dragojceva, 1979): *Macedonia must be attached to Yugoslavia for practical reasons and for the sake of expediency. The two parties must take up the stand of the self–determination of the Macedonian people.* Ignoring Greece, Comintern decisively shifted responsibility over Macedonia from Bulgaria to Yugoslavia and ruled for an "Independent Macedonia and Thrace" under Yugoslav hegemony. To put it bluntly, the Soviet–sponsored Macedonian design arrogated the rights of Macedonia's citizens of Greece that owns 75% of King Philip's historic Macedonia and infringed upon the rights of 2.5 million Hellenic Macedonians. Any doubts concerning communism's unorthodox involvement with an ethnic problem of paramount Balkan significance would have been dismissed were it known that Comintern was involved from its very early inception with the Macedonian problem.

On August 4, 1944, following up on Comintern's directive and defying history, Tito organized the first Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation of Macedonia (ASNOM) at the monastery of Prohor Pcinjsky, which proclaimed part of *Vardarska Banovina* (South Serbia) as the People's Republic of Macedonia in the federated state of Yugoslavia (Poulton 1995, pp. 103–105; Vattis 2002). The founding declaration said: "*You will succeed to unite all parts of Macedonia that the Balkan imperialists [Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs] occupied in 1913 and 1918.*" With these words, Yugoslavia's imperialism for Greek Macedonia became stronger than ever, with the struggle assuming a dangerous new dimension for the stability of the Balkan Knowledgeable people, such as the Secretary of State Edward Stettinius in the Roosevelt Administration, knew that Tito's new republic was formed on political criteria only and as a ploy to serve as a bridgehead for the virtual annexation of Hellenic Macedonia and the mutilation of Greece (Giannakos 1992; Woodhouse 1948, 1976).

Comintern's directive and the 1944 ASNOM declaration signaled a new phase of the struggle for Macedonia. For the 1940s, Tito's Yugoslavia used every means available to it to violate the Treaty of Bucharest (signed in 1913): seditious propaganda, distortion of history, anthropological studies of dubious or prejudiced nature that never considered the existence of millions of Greek Macedonians; and an unprecedented international conspiracy and violations of international law to assist the Greek communists during the Greek Civil War for the price of snatching away parts or the entire Greek Macedonia. Macedonia was ravaged during the civil war, fueled by communist Albania, communist Bulgaria and especially communist Yugoslavia to which Skopje belonged (Map 3).

For all the horrors and bloodshed, the Greek Civil War did not happen in a historical vacuum. It happened within the context of an unprecedented international conspiracy and grotesque violations of international law by the communist world (Averoff-Tossizza 1978; Papavizas 2002). It was fueled by

powerful communist organizations that threatened Greece's territorial integrity by conspiring to cede Hellenic Macedonia to Tito's People Republic of Macedonia. By 1943, Tito was displaying in his hideout a large map of Greater Macedonia, including Greek Macedonia and the Bulgarian Macedonia of Pirin. A new map published later (1946, at the beginning of the Greek Civil War) in *Borba*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, showed precisely Tito's intentions on Greek Macedonia (Map 4).

How did Tito and Yugoslavia manage to launch the *Macedonization* of Skopje and of the southernmost Yugoslav territory — known till 1944 as *Vardarska Banovina* — to forge a new nationality from a polyglot conglomerate of Slavs, Bulgarians, Albanians, Romanians, gypsies, Greeks, Turks and others and to convince the world that his reasons and methods for forging a new nationality were internationally sanctionable? How did Tito manage to deceive the international community of the Slavic Macedonian ethnicity's legitimacy? First, he converted a part of the *Vardar* Province to People's Republic of Macedonia within the Yugoslav federation, using the geographic name "Macedonia" as an ethnic name; second, he gave the people in the new republic a new language by modifying their Bulgarian dialect, giving it an alphabet — the dialect had no alphabet till 1945 — and calling it "Macedonian;"⁵ third, he created an artificial nationality by transforming the Slavs, Bulgarians, Albanians and others of the new republic to "Macedonians," and fourth, he created the schismatic "Macedonian" Church," not recognized by the Serbian Patriarchate to the present day. Greece remained silent for reasons of political expediency.

Ethnologically, the new republic was always a fluid country inhabited by several ideologically contentious groups with ties to Albania, Bulgaria, or Serbia. The 1940 official Yugoslav census recognized only two ethnic groups in the *Vardar* Province, Slavs at 66 percent and Muslims at 31 percent. In 1946, three years after the formation of the People's Republic of Macedonia, the Slavs magically disappeared from the census

that showed 66 percent "Macedonians." Was this remarkable transformation process a massive genetic mutation of the Slavic population or a census falsification? The Bulgarians insisted that the so-called Macedonians in the People's Republic of Macedonia — and in FYROM later — were Bulgarians except for the Albanians.

Giorgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian communist leader, objected to Tito's scheming, as it appears from his admonition to the renegade Dimitar Vlahov, a prominent Bulgarian communist who had adopted Tito's views on Macedonia and who was the first Bulgarian to be transformed to "Macedonian": "*Are we talking about a Macedonian nation or a Macedonian population made up of Bulgarians, Greeks, and Serbs? Does a Macedonian nation exist, and if so, where and how? Can Macedonia exist as a separate state or find freedom and statehood within the South Slav federation, regardless of the ethnic conglomerate of which it is composed*" (Kouzinopolulos 1999, from Dimitrov's Secret Diary, p. 21)?

What was Stalin's role behind these manipulations? On June 7, 1946, Stalin met with Molotov and Zhdanov representing the Soviet Union; Tito, Rankovic and Nescovic representing Yugoslavia; and Dimitrov, Kolarov and Kostov representing Bulgaria (Tsalouhides 1944). When Dimitrov expressed doubts on the *Macedonianism* of the *Vardar* Province's inhabitants, Stalin rushed to explain to him and Tito how state building—even if it is a fabrication—leads to acceptable nation building. His remarks to Dimitrov on nation building were revealing (Kouzinopoulos 1999, from Dimitrov's Secret Diary p. 22):

Pirin Macedonia must become autonomous within Bulgaria.... Whether there is a Macedonian nation or not, and whether its population has not yet developed a Macedonian consciousness, makes no difference. Such consciousness did not exist in Byelorussia either when, after the October revolution, we proclaimed it as a Soviet republic."

I have now a few serious conceptual questions on the history of the Slavic society lying in the shadow of Tito's dead imperialism and in Comintern's manipulations and intrigue. (a) What characteristics (historical, cultural, genetic, linguistic, ethnic and anthropological) do the people of

Tito's Socialist Republic of Macedonia (now FYROM) possess to be described as "Macedonians"? (b) What justification FYROM's inhabitants have to claim "Macedonian" ethnicity in view of the fact half of their country, including Skopje, never belonged to King Philip's historic Macedonia? (c) If the slavophones in the Socialist Republic of Macedonia were really Macedonians, why did they call themselves Bulgarians, fighting to incorporate Macedonia into Bulgaria, and why did they not assert their Macedonian identity for 75 years (1870–1944)?

The answers given by Skopje historians to the third question are not convincing: they insist that the people being illiterate during the early years of the Macedonian struggle, did not know what their ethnicity was. This is an unconvincing explanation because the founders of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) in 1893, a Bulgarian group, were not illiterate. Damien Grueff was a schoolmaster and Christo Tatarcheff a doctor (Dakin 1966). The Macedonian Slavs, according to Skopje, affiliated themselves with Bulgaria because it pursued the Macedonian problem with determination. Eventually, they eradicated the Bulgarian sentiments and became Macedonians (Kofos 1962).

To put the state-controlled "Macedonian" ethnogenesis in proper perspective, we need to go back to 1870 (the year of the Bulgarian religious restitution, the formation of the Exarchate) and trace the origin and sentiments of the FYROM slavophones and their ethnic transformations through the years (Koliopoulos 1995). They underwent several transformations before their final ethnic conversion to "Macedonians." They were Bulgarians from 1870 to 1913; South Slavs or *serbianized* Slavs from 1913 till the German army occupied Yugoslavia in 1941; Bulgarians again proudly

brandishing Bulgarian flags during the occupation of South Serbia by the fascist Bulgarian army (a Hitler gift to Bulgaria for joining Nazi Germany during World War II); Yugoslav communist partisans during the occupation; and then communist "Macedonians" by 1944 with new roots, history and language.

While Tito's communist regime was being laid to rest with his death in 1980, what followed was the secession from Yugoslavia in 1991 of a small country, whose politicians decided to use the name *Republika Makedonija* for the newly independent state to tie its Slavic past with the glorious Macedonian history. To support the connection, FYROM propelled to the world a population amalgamation theory to show that its Slavic inhabitants are products of genetic blending of their ancestors — who arrived in the Balkans thousand years after Alexander's death — with the ancient Macedonians (Martis 1983; Panov 1996). According to this theory, a Macedonian is a "completely modern product" of racial amalgamation between the Slavs of the Middle Ages and a mixture of ancient Macedonians and other inhabitants (Anarhistov 1982). This theory is part of the curriculum in FYROM's schools today (Vlasides 2003, p. 346–47).

The theory overlooks a very critical point: Why did the Macedonians wait thousand years to be amalgamated with the Slavs? The other Greeks were always there. The Macedonians had better chances; common language, myths and customs; and a thousand-year span to be amalgamated with the other Greeks than to wait all those long years for the new Slav-speaking "suits" from the north. It is useless for Skopjan historians to attempt to prove differences between ancient Macedonians and the other Greeks. Even if they existed, such differences disappeared in the thousand years before the Slavs arrived in the Balkans (Hammond 1989, 1997).

On September 13, 1995, Athens and Skopje signed an Interim Agreement and established diplomatic relations (Zaikos 2003). FYROM, with an initial irredentist constitution, agreed not to

interfere in the internal affairs of another state in order to protect the status and rights of any persons in other states who are not FYROM citizens. Athens recognized FYROM and agreed to assist it to enter various international organizations. The two countries also agreed to take effective measures to prohibit hostile activities or propaganda by State-controlled agencies and to discourage acts by private entities likely to incite violence, hatred or hostility against each other. The U. N. Security Council decisions 817 and 845 (1993) did not introduce an agreement on the name, but directed the two parties to find an amicable solution. No agreement has been reached to this day.

Greece fulfilled all its obligations under the Interim Agreement and has made more than enough other concessions during the twelve years of the agreement as well as providing FYROM other assistance. Greece encouraged more than a billion dollar investment in FYROM by private persons; it allowed FYROM's commerce to move through the Greek port of Thessaloniki; it helped FYROM enter several international organizations, including the all important Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union; it has permitted FYROM officers to be trained in Greek military schools, some of them with Greek scholarships; and it has stood politically and financially by the FYROM government during its nationalist clash with the local Albanian minority in 2001.

After signing the agreement, FYROM violated basic norms of international behavior and almost every provision of the Interim Agreement, paying Greece back for its assistance and generosity with a constant anti-Hellenic propaganda barrage, provocations in the media and the Internet and distortions of history. For example, FYROM accused Greece of unjustifiably using the name "Macedonia," and printed school books depicting Greek heroes as FYROM heroes and Greek landmarks as FYROM landmarks. It also circulated maps showing itself as part of "Greater Macedonia," including Greek Macedonia all together with Thessaloniki (Vlasides 2003, p. 338).⁶ Recently, FYROM renamed the airport in the FYROM capital of Skopje, the

"Alexander the Great" Airport; resurrected the tenets of the old, purely Bulgarian uprising of 1903 against the Turks and embraced them to write its irredentist constitution; borrowed personalities from the pantheon of Greek heroes and Bulgarian heroes, writers, officers and revolutionaries; inculcated in the young minds the defunct communist expansionist tendencies and the idea to hate the Greeks, a violation of article 7 of the Interim Agreement (Vlasides 2003); and, worst of all, it violated article 11 of the Interim Agreement, stating that FYROM may not use any other name, other than "FYROM" until an agreement on the name is reached. FYROM has, in fact, been referring to itself as "Macedonia."

It was obvious from their constitution's irredentism that Greece was targeted for future verbal, political and diplomatic assault from day one. Considering all these disturbing facts, we see now with apprehension that history has reached the absurd and untenable point where a small country calling itself "Republic of Macedonia" may not only demand — by the power of its apprehended name — to be recognized as a Macedonia, but to be propelled to the world as the only Macedonia; and its Slavic people may not only demand — by the power granted to them by a dictator — to be some "Macedonians," but to demand recognition as the only Macedonians.

Now, a few words about the international community and its stance on the issue. Calling the inhabitants of FYROM "Macedonians," automatically deprives three million Hellenic Macedonians of their Macedonian name and identity. This serious argument has nothing to do with the glorious Macedonian kings, the ancient Macedonian Hellenism, the 3,000 years of Macedonian history, or the *Hellenistic Era*. It has to do with the simple, unaccepted fact that the FYROM Slavs are attempting to monopolize a name that people next door have been using continuously for 3,000 years. It has also to do with the fact that a country (FYROM), which forms a small part of a larger whole country — less than 20% of Philip's historic Macedonia — portrays itself as representing the entire

Macedonia, with future rights on the entire geographic Macedonia.⁷

FYROM's dogma proclaims now on all levels — political, scientific, educational, diplomatic, and media — that the entire geographic area of Macedonia, stretching from Tetovo in FYROM to the Bulgarian capital in the north, down to Mount Olympus in the south, constitutes "ethnic Macedonian territory," the homeland of the "Macedonian nation," which was unfairly partitioned in 1913 with the Treaty of Bucharest; and the homeland of the "Macedonian" people who consider the Greeks and Bulgarians as foreign trespassers.

After the repeated violations of the Interim Accord, we must ask: is FYROM ready to participate in the *"Search for a Roadmap of Peace in the Balkans?"* Is FYROM ready to enter NATO and the European Union?

Adoption of the name "Macedonia" by Skopje constitutes another equally serious threat to Greece: a threat to its national identity and cultural heritage. What does that mean? It means that monopolizing the name, inadvertently will lead to a Slavic monopoly of everything Macedonian: history, civilization, culture, identity, heroes, customs, symbols, arts, traditions. Failing to preserve the cultural-historical heritage is tantamount to Greece failing to keep alive the Hellenic Macedonian ethnic identity, culture, and pride.

Pushed into a difficult corner in the midst of the international Macedonian controversy, Greece must find it hard to forgive the disappointing stance of its friends and allies, who sanctioned the use of the name "Macedonia" by the small republic. The irony of the U.S. policy is that it assisted Greece to protect its territory in the 1940s, and then, forgetting the rivers of blood spilled by the Greek people to thwart communism's advance from its extensive bases in Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria, turned around and recognized as "Macedonians" the people against whom Greece was fighting with America's help to preserve its territorial integrity during

the Greek Civil War; the people that welcomed the Bulgarian fascists as liberators in 1944 in the streets of Skopje and who, during Greece's critical years in the 1940s assisted the Greek communists in their attempts to overthrow the Greek government.

Equally paradoxical is the fact that when the political and military pendulum swung in the opposite direction after Greece successfully repulsed Soviet-sponsored communism, Greece became the aggressor in the eyes of the West, as if Greece were the guilty party that usurped its neighbor's name and assumed an identity that belongs to another country; as if Greece were the country that appropriated a foreign emblem to decorate its flag; as if Greece were the country with an irredentist constitution, claiming territories right and left, north and south.⁸

With these perspectives in mind, the insistence of FYROM Slavs to be called "Macedonians," a name dictatorially established and supported by communism's brutal force and theoretical base sixty years ago, clashes now with the age-old freedom of Hellenic Macedonians to be called "Macedonians." If FYROM considers itself Macedonia, a false and audaciously daring step that brings the origin of its Slavic inhabitants close to Philip and Alexander the Great, then the insistence of these people to be called "Macedonians" clashes head on with the age-old freedom of others to be called "Macedonians." According to the Academy of Athens, FYROM has the right to survive and prosper, but it does not have the right to acquire, by international recognition, an advantage enjoyed by no other state in the world: to use a name which of itself propagandizes territorial aspirations at Greece's expense (Kargakos 1992).

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