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THE GRECO-MACEDONIAN DISPUTE OVER THE NAME OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The Republic of Macedonia is a state created following the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1991. Constitutionally, it adopted its former Yugoslav-era name but dispensed with the earlier qualifiers like ‘peoples’ and ‘socialist.’ On 16 April 1991, the Macedonian Parliament passed an amendment to the constitution, changing the name of the state to the Republic of Macedonia.¹ As the Greek political scientist Aristotle Tziampiris has noted,² the country’s leaders were surprised by Greece’s negative response to the name, a development that they had no way of foreseeing. Their claims may be justified in that Greece had not previously voiced any objections to their northern neighbour’s name of the ‘People’s Republic of Macedonia’ (later the Socialist Republic of Macedonia). Yet the founder of post-war Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito, managed to temper Macedonian ambitions in order to maintain unity in the country³ and good relations with neighbouring Greece. In 1954, Yugoslavia together

¹ The name of the state was confirmed in the new constitution of the Republic of Macedonia of 17 November 1991.

² A. Tziampiris, ‘The Name Dispute in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia after the Signing of the Interim Accord’ in E. Kofos (ed.), *Athens-Skopje: An Uneasy Symbiosis*, Athens 2005, pp. 226–227.

³ Such threats existed right after World War II when Greece was engulfed in civil war and plans for a Balkan or Bulgaro-Yugoslav federation began to take real shape. For more on this subject, see Arhiv na Makedonija (AM) Skopje, fond: CK KPM, k.1, 427.4.30/206–218. Instructor Vlado Strugar informs CK KPM on May 30, 1946, l.5 about VMRO activities in Strumica and nearby villages and about steps to be taken to combat it. We also learn about this organization from a report of a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Macedonia, see AM, fond: CK KPM, k. 1, a.e. 29, l. 3, Zapisnik Br. 6, Sastanak CK KPM na 8 V 1947 god., “VMRO groups appear as central reactionary organizations [...]. At present, there is no general VMRO organization for the whole of Macedonia, but that does not mean it cannot be created if we do not take appropriate action.” See also S. Risteovski, *Sudeni za Makedonija (1945–1985)*, Ohrid 1995, p. 84f; R.L. Wolff,

with Greece and Turkey created the Balkan Pact.⁴ Today, as we ponder the causes of this 'naming battle' and its consequences, it is worth considering the arguments of both sides.

THE NOTION OF MACEDONIA IN RECENT HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY DIPLOMACY

The notions of Macedonia and Macedonian appeared in the 1860's as modern states arose on the Balkan Peninsula. Macedonia's political borders were drawn-up by the 1878 Berlin congress, when all the territory that remained under Turkish rule, except Albanian regions and Thrace, became known as Macedonia. The new Balkan states, hopeful to extend their territorial possessions, chose to describe their prospective gains. It was a time when, next to the Greek 'Mégla Idea,' concepts sprang up of 'Greater Serbia,' 'Greater Bulgaria,' 'Greater Albania' which were at odds with the aspirations of the people inhabiting Macedonia. At first, the argument was primarily between religious organizations: namely, between the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople, which possessed a religious monopoly among local Christians; and Slavic religious organizations who wanted to break that monopoly, particularly the Bulgarian exarchate (a latter day practitioner of the medieval tradition of such conflict). The latter hierarchy, capitalizing on support from Slavic Orthodoxy in Russia, went from strength to strength and shortly before the First Balkan War succeeded in drawing the largest segment of the Slavic population in what was called Macedonia into the Bulgarian cultural circle. Bulgaria's rival, modern Greece, kept fighting a losing battle. Then a third competitor appeared: the Serbian state, which, having potential routes of expansion to the north and west (towards Bosnia and Herzegovina) blocked by Austria-Hungary in 1878, decided to focus on the only remaining direction – south into Macedonia. As a result, before the First Balkan War the notion of Macedonia was coterminous with the area inhabited mainly by southern Slavs, who were culturally and politically aligned with Bulgaria, and constantly battling a retreating Hellenism. Being a late arrival, Serbia commanded negligible influence in the area and, consequently, stood a lesser chance of winning the hearts of the Slavic masses in Macedonia.

The Balkans in Our Time, Cambridge (Mass.) 1974, p. 316; S. Troebst, *Die bulgarisch-jugoslawische Kontroverse um Makedonien 1967-1982*, München 1983; 'Januarskite nastani na Skopsko kale – 1945' in *Zbornik na dokumenti vo izdanie na Arhivot na Makedonija*, Skopje 1997; 'Metodija Andonov-»ento' in M. Dimitrijeviški, Z. Todorovski, R. Buneski-Bunte (eds.), *Dokumenti i materialni*, Skopje 2002; »ento. »ovek, revolucioner, dreavnik. *Zbornik na materialni od Trkalezna masa odr`an na 26.11.1991 godina vo Prilep*, Prilep 1993; R. Buneski-Bunte, *Metodija Andonov-»ento' in Makedonski naroden tribun*, Skopje 2002; «ento i makedonskata dr`avnost. *Zbornik na trudovite od nau- niot sobir po povod 100-godijninata od na|aweto na Metodija Andonov-«ento, odr`an vo Skopje na 16 i 17 dekenvri 2002 godina*, Skopje 2004.

⁴ L. Georgievski, *Ostvaruvawe na vekovniot son*, Skopje 2001, pp. 17, 21, suggests that the Balkan Pact was unfavourable for Macedonia.

In the 1860's, when the word 'Macedonia' became common usage for a political concept that was applied to this particular territory, a tendency appeared that identified the national separateness of its Slavic inhabitants. The rising national awareness of Macedonians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was partly influenced by cultural processes, but even more by the struggles against the Turks and conflicts with neighbouring Balkan states which tried to subsume Macedonia. In an attempt to secure Macedonian autonomy from Turkey, a revolutionary organization called VMRO (Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija) was established in 1893.⁵ Next to local partisans known as *komiti* and Bulgarian *czeta* units, there appeared *andartes*, fighters recruited from among the local Greeks or from the home country (in 1881, Greece was given the right by the Berlin congress to extend its territory to include Thessaly, which made it a contiguous neighbour of the then Turkish Macedonia), and *chetniks* dispatched from Serbia or organized from those few local elements who leaned toward Serbia. This orientation was undoubtedly the least represented in Macedonia, the main struggle being between the supporters of Bulgarian and Greek aspirations. Gradually, the decade leading to 1903 became marked by a war of all against all in which *komiti*, *chetniks*, *andartes* attacked not only Turkish forces and administrators, but each other as well.

With war cries of 'Macedonia for the Macedonians,' an insurrection broke out on 2 August 1903, on the feast of St. Elias (Ilia), for which reason it went down in history as the Ilinden Uprising. Struggles were fought in three vilayets (provinces): Vitola, Saloniki, and Skopje, as well as in Adrianople in Thrace. Armed *komiti* forces won their greatest successes in Monastir (Bitola) vilayet, near the town of Kruševo, where

⁵ The organization's motto, fight for autonomy, is variously interpreted by historians. Most publications on the subject appeared in Macedonia and Bulgaria. K. Bitovski, *Istorija na makedonskiot narod*, Skopje 2003, Vol. 3; B. Ristovski, *Istorija na makedonskata nacija*, Skopje 1999; M. Pandevski, *Nacionalno prašawe vo osloboditelnoto dvi'ewe*, Skopje 1974; idem *Makedonija na Balkanot XIV-XX istoriski koordinati*, Skopje 1990; I. Katarxiev, *Sto godini od formiraweto na VMRO, sto godini revolucionerna tradicija*, Skopje 1993; A. Hristov, *VMRO i makedonskata dr'avnost 1893-1944 (Istoriskopraven osvrt)*, Skopje 1993; V. Veskovij-Vangeli, *Borbata za nezavisna makedonska republika od Ilinden do ASNOM*, Skopje 1995; D. Popovski, 'Ilindenskata revolucija i Kruševskata republika vo borbata na makedonskiot narod za nacionalno i socijalno osloboduvawe' in A. Hristov (ed.), *Prilozi za Ilinden*, Kruševo 1979, pp. 21-42; M. Apostolski (ed.), *Razvitok na dr'avnosta na makedonskiot narod*, Skopje 1966; M. Apostolski (ed.), *Ilinden 1903. Materiali od simpoziumot po povod 65-godišnjinata od ilindenskoto vstanie odr'an na 27, 28 i 29 maj 1968 god. vo Ohrid*, Skopje 1970; V. Veskovij-Vangeli, *Francuska revolucija i Kruševskiot manifest 1903*, Skopje 1993; G. Georgiev, J. Popov, *Ilindenskoto v'stanie*, Sofia 1969, p. 225; K. Pandev, 'Programni iskania na VMRO do i po vreme na v'staniето' in X. Xristov (ed.), *Ilindensko-Preobra'ensko v'stanie ot 1903 godina*, Sofia 1983, pp. 33-39; idem, *Nacionalnoosvoboditelnoto dviaenie v Makedonija i Odrinsko 1878-1903*, Sofia 2000, pp. 181-205; L. Panajotov, 'Nacionalnoosvoboditelnoto dvi'enie na makedonskite Bŕlgari (1878-1918)', *Bŕlgaristika* (Sofia) Vol. 5-6 (1990), pp. 19-32; V. Angelov, *Makedonskata kŕrvava koleba*, Sofia 2003; K. Karaka-anov, *VMRO 110 godini borba za bŕlgarĖinata*, Sofia 2004; S. Germanov, *Ruskata obĖstvenost i revolucionernoto dviaenie v Makedonija i Odrinsko 1893-1908*, Sofia 1992. See also M. Glenny, *The Balkans 1804-1999. Nationalism, War and the Great Powers*, London 2000, pp. 205-216; G. Castellan, *Histoire des Balkans (XIVe-XXe siĖcle)*, Paris 1991, pp. 350-362.

a local authority and council were set up. Macedonian historiography often refers to the liberated area as the Kruševo Republic. The aims of the uprising were stated in the Kruševo Manifesto published in local dialect. Under a 'Freedom or Death' banner, autonomy was proclaimed for Macedonia and equal rights were promised to all inhabitants regardless of language or religion. Fighting continued for three more months with varying fortunes. On 4 August the insurrectionists captured the town of Klisura (near Kostur), where they operated until 27 August, and Neveska (now Nimfeon) near Lerin (Flôrina), which put up prolonged resistance. Attacks were mounted on railway lines, which disrupted transportation routes, bridges were demolished, Turkish garrisons were assaulted. The largest battle was fought for a garrison in the village of Čaništa (near Prilepu). In the course of the Ilinden Uprising, the *komiti* stood out for their heroism and sacrifice.

As the uprising progressed, the Greeks together with their clergy sided with the Turks because of the predominantly Slavic composition of the insurrection, and following its collapse the Greek *makedonomahi* proved to be particularly hostile, and terrorized local people. The uprising received support from Bulgaria, causing diplomatic conflict between Turkey and the Duchy of Bulgaria, which concluded with a treaty on 8 April 1904. Bulgaria had to promise not to interfere in Macedonian affairs, and Turkey confirmed its desire to introduce reforms in Saloniki, Monastir (Bitola), and Kosovo vilayets. At that time, the Slavs living in Macedonia were usually referred to as Bulgars. The term 'Macedonian' referred to an inhabitant of that land who pursued a political agenda, not as we understand the term today, a member of a South Slavic nation.

Given the weakness of the Macedonian revolutionary movement, often controlled from the outside (by Bulgarians), the three neighbouring countries enjoyed much freedom of action. Macedonian separatist tendencies were not welcomed in Sofia or Belgrade, to say nothing of Athens. The three felt it necessary to form an alliance as they could not envisage room in the Balkans for yet another state – Macedonia.

In addition, the Macedonian liberation movement faced one more danger: rising Albanian nationalism whose leaders made serious claims to western Macedonia as part of 'Greater Albania.' It was the Albanian national movement that helped bring together Bulgaria, Montenegro, Greece, and Serbia, all fearing that Turkey would, as it had in the past, use Albanians against Slavs and Greeks, and they formed a Balkan League.

The two Balkan Wars ended in peace talks and the signing of a treaty in Bucharest on 10 August 1913. Northern and central Macedonia with Kumanovo, Skopje, Bitola, and Ohrid fell to Serbia (25,713 sq. km), while a larger southern part (34,203 sq. km) with Saloniki, Kostur (now Kastoríá), Lerin (now Flôrina) was awarded to Greece, which thus extended its Aegean coast up to the river Mesta. Only an eastern portion of Macedonia with Gorna Dzhumaya and Petrich, at the time also with Strumica, was incorporated into Bulgaria (6,798 sq. km). Such a division of Macedonia, with only minor alterations (after World War I the Strumica region was awarded to the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs), has remained in force until today.

In a partitioned Macedonia, the new masters introduced their own laws and ignored the wishes of the local population. Serbs called their acquisition South Serbia (Južna Srbija), and its inhabitants were designated in official terminology as South Serbians (južnosrbjanci). In Bulgaria, 'Macedonia,' continued to be used but the people were considered to be Bulgarians. After the Second Balkan War, Bulgaria established close ties with Austria-Hungary and Germany and entered World War I in the hope of securing the dream of a 'Greater Bulgaria' which would also embrace Macedonia. Its alignment with the Central Powers brought about disastrous consequences for Bulgaria and ended in another defeat.

THE CREATION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

The architect of the People's Republic of Macedonia was Josip Broz Tito. It embraced only one part of Macedonia, that which had been awarded to Serbia in 1913, the so-called Vardar Macedonia.

The decision to create a Macedonian republic within the Yugoslav state was taken as early as 1943 in Jajce, a liberated area in Bosnia, during the second session of AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Yugoslavia), the supreme representative and legislative body of the nations in Yugoslavia. A resolution of that session recognized that Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, and Macedonian were equal languages in the entire Yugoslav territory, and that the state would be a federation which would also include a Macedonian republic. It was the first time in its history that the Macedonian language was recognized as an official language in any state, and Macedonia became part of a federal state on equal terms with all the other republics in the federation.

The Jajce provisions were confirmed on 2 August 1944 by ASNOM (Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Macedonia), which convened in Sv. Otec Prohor Pčinjski monastery. The date was chosen to commemorate the outbreak of the Ilinden Uprising, which had become a symbol of the struggle for national liberation. The act was tantamount to declaring that the Macedonians were a distinct people with their own history, language, and culture.

The people of Macedonia did not wholly accept those provisions, with controversy erupting even during the ASNOM session. Separatist tendencies were riding high at that time, and threatened to upset order in Yugoslavia. Many voices were heard demanding secession from the federation and the creation of a separate state. Representatives of the other ethnic groups in Macedonia were denied entry into the session; especially the Serbians and even those Macedonians who had lived in Serbia. The chief proponent of separatism was Metodija Andonov-Čento.⁶ Plans for Macedonian unification and the establishment of a state relied

⁶ »ento. »ovek, revolucioner, dra'avnik...; R. Buntjeski-Bunte, *Metodija Andonov-«ento. Makedonski naroden tribun*, Skopje 2002; »ento i makedonskata dr'avnost. *Zbornik na trudovite...*

in part on plans for a Balkan federation and on the wider situation in the region before 1949.

THE MACEDONIAN MINORITY IN GREECE

When Greece acquired 51% of Macedonian territory in 1913, its ethnic composition differed from the present. As Greek statistics report, the Aegean Macedonian population was 43% Greek, with Turks and Slavs (today's Macedonians) at 39% and 10% respectively, except that the Greek category included Slavs under the jurisdiction of the same Orthodox patriarchate as ethnic Greeks. If language is used as the sole criterion, the proportions would be different: 20-25% Greeks and 20-35% Slavs.⁷ Greek figures have been criticized by Macedonian, Bulgarian, and independent scholars.⁸

Aegean (Greek) Macedonia lost its Slavic character as a result of the migrations after the First World War, which were mandated by the Bulgaro-Greek convention at Neuilly on 27 November 1919, on voluntary population exchanges, and after the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922) and the subsequent convention concluded in Lausanne on 30 January 1923, on compulsory population exchanges between Turkey and Greece. In place of Macedonian Slavs (present-day Macedonians) who then left Greek Macedonia, the period 1913-1928 witnessed the settlement of Greeks from Bulgaria, Orthodox adherents from Turkey, and Greeks from Thessaly, Peloponnese, and Epirus. In this part of Macedonia, 618,199 people were settled in 1913-1928,⁹ altering its ethnic composition. Lena Divani reports that Greece's policies in the interwar period led to coercive measures to Hellenize the province and its inhabitants. Such a policy reached a dramatic peak in 1936-41, when all topographic names as well as Macedonians' given and family names were changed, and evening classes in Greek were made obligatory.¹⁰ As a result, Macedonians embraced the communist movement, which granted them nationality rights. Their support for communism

⁷ D. Lithoksoou, *Meionotika Zitimata kai Ethniki Syneidisi stin Ellada: Atasthalies tis Ellinikis Istoriografis*, Athina 1991, p. 115. Similar data are quoted by G.B. Zotiades, *The Macedonian Controversy*, Thesaloniki 1961, p. 39.

⁸ S. Kiselinovski, I. Stavovi-Kavka, *Malcinstvata na Balkanot (XX vek)*, Skopje 2004, p. 56, suggests that the proportion of the non-Greek population in 1900 was 77.5%, with Greeks having only 22.5%. Taking account of the whole Macedonian territory, Greeks only made up 9.8%. The figures quoted after: D.M. Brancoff, *La Macedoine et sa population Chrétienne*, Paris 1905, pp. 98-247, who estimates the percentage of Bulgarians at 68.9%, and Greeks at 24.1%. V. Kín-ov, *MakedoniŌ. EtnografŌ i statistika. Fototipno izdanie*, SofiŌ 1996, pp. 136f, compiled data in 1900 suggesting that Greek Macedonia had 357,666 Bulgarians and 218,774 Greeks. For changes in the structure of the Macedonian population, see I. Stawowy-Kawka, 'Ludność Macedonii – zmiany struktury narodowościowej w XX wieku', *Dzieje Najnowsze*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (1998), pp. 27-41.

⁹ *Statistica apotelesmata tisapografis tu plithizmu tis Elados 15-16 maiu 1928*, Athina 1935, p. 12.

¹⁰ L. Divani, *Ellada kai Meionotites: to systema diethnous prostasias tis Koinonias ton Ethnon*, Athen 1995, p. 345, see also S. Kiselinovski, *Etni-kite promeni vo Makedonija (1913-1995)*, Skopje 2000.

would cost them dearly after the civil ended: about 35,000 Macedonians fled from Greece in 1948 and 1949; their property was then confiscated.¹¹ After World War II, Greece hardened its attitude towards the 'Macedonian question':

- Macedonia is a geographical concept referring to a specific region. The notion of Macedonia, therefore, points to a regional rather than national origin;
- The three parts of Macedonia that were divided in 1912 and 1913 exhibit no unifying qualities, either economically, or ethnically, or linguistically;
- There is no distinct Macedonian nationality.¹²

At present, the number of Macedonians in Greece is estimated at 150,000.¹³ The Greeks argue this figure is an exaggeration. Local authorities' estimates of Slavic inhabitants they call Slavophones (the term was coined in the interwar period) speak of 50,000 to 100,000. The number is fluid as censuses do not list them as a distinct ethnic group since Macedonians in Greece are denied this status. The situation is made more complex because not all members of this community have a strongly developed sense of Macedonian identity. Some – a majority – have assimilated and only declare that they have a distinct language, but do not aspire to the status of a national minority. Others admit to having only a local Slavo-Macedonian nationality (Slavomakedones), rather than a Greek or Macedonian nationality, and only a small percentage identify with the present nation of the Republic of Macedonia (these call themselves Makedones).¹⁴

According to Evangelos Kofos, what is controversial is not the existence of a Slavic group in northern Greece, or denials of this fact, but references to concepts of 'minority', 'language,' and 'nation' as being Macedonian. Kofos writes: '[...] the problem lies not in the fact that people of Slavic origin want [...] to function as an ethnic or national minority; it lies in the name they have chosen – *Makedones* in Greek – as those who reside in Greece chose to describe themselves.'¹⁵ To agree to such an understanding of the name *Makedonos* would be tantamount to stripping two million Greeks in the northern part of the country, the province Macedonia, of their regional identity. To Greeks, Macedonia is a Greek idea, the homeland of Alexander the Great, a Greek, and a pupil of Aristotle. They do not mind the fact that during the Macedonian expansion Athenians did not welcome this powerful

¹¹ Arhiv na Makedonija, fond. br. 996, k.- IV/3/21, Izveštaj za repatrijacija na emigracijata.

¹² N.P. Andriotes, *The Federative Republic of Skopje and Its Language*, Athens 1966; W. Kofos, *Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia*, Thessaloniki 1964; G.B. Zotiades, *The Macedonian Controversy*, Thessaloniki 1961; *Macedonia. Past and Present*, reprints from *Balkan Studies*, Thessaloniki 1992.

¹³ Macedonian historians estimate the number of Macedonian speakers in Greek Macedonia at 240,000, see S. Kiselinovski, *Etni-kite...*, p. 48. H.J. Axt, 'Mazedonien: ein Streit um Namen oder ein Konflikt vor dem Asbruch?', *Europa Archiv. Zeitschrift für Internationale Politik*, 10 February 1993, p. 68, reports the number of Macedonians in Greece as between 150,000 and 300,000.

¹⁴ GHM, Minority Rights Group – Greece (MRG – G), 'Report about Compliance with the Principles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of the National Minorities', at <www.greekhel-sinki.gr>, p. 2.

¹⁵ E. Kofos, 'The Unresolved "Difference over the Name": A Greek Perspective' in E. Kofos (ed.), *Athens-Skopje...*, p. 132.

ruler. Demosthenes called Alexander's father Philip II a barbarian, which is still used today by Slavic Macedonians as an argument against considering the land as being Greek. They point to the battle of Cheronea, when Athenians and other Greek states accepted briefly Philip II's domination in Macedonia; and note that during Alexander's Asian expedition, the Greek states only participated because they had no other option. Yet the ethos of the struggle for Macedonia in the early twentieth century is deeply engraved in Greeks' national memory.

From the perspective of the Greeks, the 'Macedonian problem' exists only in terms of a Slavic people appropriating their history, culture, tradition, and especially the name Macedonia. They therefore readily use a replacement term, the Republic of Skopje, for their northern neighbour, Skopjans for its inhabitants, Skopjan for its media or the cultural goods produced there. Greek politicians, journalists, scholars go so far as to replace the 'Macedonian problem' with 'Skopjan problem' (*to Skopiano*) coined in the early 1990's. For most Greeks, the Republic of Macedonia is an 'artificial state' which is bound to descend into oblivion unless the Skopje authorities change their policy.¹⁶

In Greece, the terms Macedonia and Macedonians are reserved for the inhabitants of Greek (Aegean) Macedonia, while their use by northern neighbours is an erroneous combination of a Slavic element with an antique culture. Kofos argues that the roots and language of ancient Macedonians were unquestionably Hellenic, and the present-day Skopje area was not part of the Macedonian Empire at the time of Philip of Macedon. In 1992, the Greek post office issued stamps with ancient and Byzantine relics in Macedonia and the phrase 'Macedonia always was and will be Greek.'¹⁷ The slogan can be seen throughout northern Greece on posters displayed in virtually all of region's cities.

It is not for this paper to try to determine who has more right to use the name Macedonia. Yet one cannot ignore the consequences of these still unsettled international issues for those citizens of Greece who call themselves Macedonians (and who the Greeks refer to as Slavophones), and for the post-civil war emigrants. Discord over this issue has a negative impact upon Macedonian associations and organizations, to which the Greeks deny minority status. After the Greek civil war, Macedonians who emigrated were stripped of citizenship on the grounds of article 19 of the Citizenship Code, which was not wholly rescinded until 1998. In 1982, Athens made it possible for Greeks (not Macedonians) who had taken part in the civil war on the communist side to be repatriated. According to Dimistris Christopoulos and Konstantionos Tsitselikis,¹⁸ this was done in order to make only Greeks eligible; the effect was to ex-

¹⁶ A.N. Kounadis, 'To makedoniko zitima kai I elliniki oligoria', *Kathimerina*, 3 July 2005, at <www.kathimerini.gr>.

¹⁷ E. Kofos, 'Greece's Macedonian Adventure: The Controversy over FYROM's Independence and Recognition' in V. Coufoudakis, H. Psomiades, A. Gerolymastos (eds.), *Greece and the New Balkans. Challenges and Opportunities*, New York 1999, p. 365.

¹⁸ D. Christopoulos, K. Tsitselikis, 'Treatment of Minorities and *omogeneis* in Greece: Relics and Challenges', at <www.kemo.gr>.

clude the Macedonian minority – that is, those declaring themselves to be Macedonians. Such practices apply to people coming from Greece who are not ethnic Greeks, which violates the constitutional equality of citizens and Greece's obligations under the protection of national minority rights. Those that possess Macedonian passports or passports of third-party states often find it difficult to enter Greece.

A number of categories and criteria were developed to discriminate between people; these largely determine whether a given person stands a chance of recovering citizenship. Nor are the discriminatory policies of the Greek authorities limited to hindering re-naturalization or such simple issues as the possibility of visiting family members, birthplace, etc. Associations for culture, education, promotion of the Macedonian cultural heritage, contacts with Skopje are all viewed with hostility. Theoretically, all such organizations enjoy constitutional guarantees of freedom, but in reality any mention of Macedonian affiliation meet with open disapproval or even repression, and not only from officials, but also from Greek society. The officially registered (since 1994) Macedonian political party is Vinožito (Rainbow), which was formerly a cultural organization. It is accused of separatist tendencies, unlawful appropriation of the name Macedonia, and that it desires the separation from Greece of the province which possesses that name. When it displayed on its office a sign in Macedonian, it was set on fire. Organizations for minority rights report cases of local authorities exerting pressure to hinder Macedonians' access to the media, such as in the case of the few titles like *Ta Moylena* and *Zora* (hints were dropped to the printers that they were lacking in patriotism and collaborating with Skopje agents).

Activists for Macedonian minority rights include the Greek clergyman Archimandrite Nikodimos Tsarknias. As a leader of the Movement for the Defence of Macedonians' Rights in Greece, which demanded that the minority be allowed to preserve its culture, tradition, and language, he was punished by the Bishop of Flórina, who relieved him of his duties for disobedience and for publications in the *Ta Moylena* newspaper. He was later briefly reinstated, only to be discharged again in 1993. Subsequently Tsarknias joined the Macedonian Church, was stigmatized for being schismatic, and received multiple convictions for unlawful performance of priestly duties and the wearing of a cassock.¹⁹

MACEDONIAN STATEHOOD AND THE DISPUTE OVER ITS NAME

The referendum in which the people of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia chose to create a sovereign state took place on 8 September 1991. The turnout was 63.32% of the population, with Albanians (over 23% of the population) boycotting the bal-

¹⁹ The court argued that as a Greek citizen, Tsarknias could not claim to be a member of a non-Greek church. During the trial he heard abusive shouts like 'Traitor!', 'Disgrace!', 'Defender of foreign homeland'. See US State Department, *International Religious Freedom Report 2005. Greece*, at <www.state.gov/g/drl/irf/2005>.

lot. An overwhelming majority (95.08%) of voters supported independence. On 17 September the parliament heard a declaration confirming the people's consent to establish a sovereign republic, after which on 17 November the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia was adopted. President Kiro Gligorov solemnly declared the establishment of the Republic of Macedonia on 20 November 1991.

The preamble to the constitution cited the Macedonians' historical aspirations²⁰ to their own statehood and stated that the Republic of Macedonia is a '[...] nation state of the Macedonian people which safeguards the body of law to achieve equality of all citizens and lasting coexistence of the Macedonian people with Albanians, Turks, Koutsovlachs, Gypsies, and other nationalities inhabiting the Republic...' ²¹

The constitution of the newly created state resulted in a series of controversies in Athens. On 29 November 1991, the Greek government spokesman Emanuel Kalamidas said, 'The new constitution of the Republic of Macedonia is a "multiple provocation." It does not guarantee the inviolability of borders, arouses territorial claims against Greece, and opens the problem of the existence of a Macedonian minority in Greece.'²² Soon afterwards, on 4 December 1991, Athens laid down its first conditions for the recognition of the Republic of Macedonia. 'It may not use the name Macedonia, as this has only a purely geographic rather than ethnic significance. It must also guarantee that it makes no territorial claims to our country. It must further acknowledge that there is no "Macedonian minority" in Greece.'²³

The greatest controversy was caused by constitutional clauses which had already been introduced as amendment LVIII to the constitution of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia on 20 September 1990, which said, 'The Socialist Republic of Macedonia cares for the status and rights of that part of the Macedonian nation who live in neighbouring countries, attends to the needs of Macedonians in other countries, persons displaced from Macedonia, and citizens working temporarily outside the country, supports them, assists their development, and helps maintain contact with them...' ²⁴

Such provisions were sustained in the Republic of Macedonia constitution of 17 November 1991, as clause 49. Clause 3, which only stated that the territory of the Republic is indivisible, its borders permanent and inviolable, did not persuade the Greeks that these provisions gave them sufficient guarantees with regard to their own borders. On the contrary, such provisions were interpreted as expressing a desire to interfere in Greece's internal affairs and to pursue territorial expansion.

²⁰ The preamble cites historical, cultural, and state-building traditions of the Macedonian people, i.e., Kruševska Republika (created during the the Ilinden Uprising), ASNOM decisions, the functioning of the republic when part of the Yugoslav Federation, and the referendum of 8 September 1991, when the Macedonians decided to establish a sovereign state.

²¹ *Ustav na Republika Makedonija*, Skopje 1991, p. 3.

²² A. Tuntev, *Republika Makedonija. Prva dekada (1990-1999)*, Skopje 2005, p. 252.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Slu'ben vesnik na SRM*, br. 28 od 21 septemvri 1990 godina.

Greek protests were addressed by the Macedonian parliament in a declaration of 17 September 1991, which stated, 'The Republic of Macedonia will effect its policies based on international law and their chief aim will be the recognition of and respect for fundamental human rights and liberties, including the rights and liberties of Macedonians who live in neighbouring countries as a national minority. The Republic of Macedonia understands that it is a problem to be resolved solely by peaceful and democratic means and in the spirit of European and civilized standards.'²⁵

The president of the Republic of Macedonia, despite the objections of the then majority ruling party VMRO-DPMNE, succeeded in enacting two amendments to the constitution in order to appease the Greeks. The amendments were adopted on 6 January 1992. They applied to articles 3 and 49. Article 3 was supplemented with two sentences:

1. *The Republic of Macedonia makes no territorial claims against any of its neighbouring countries.*

2. *The borders of the Republic of Macedonia may be altered only in accordance with the Constitution and based on the good will and in harmony with commonly accepted international law.*

Article 49, which is devoted to the rights of the Macedonian minority and displaced Macedonians, was amended with: '*In order to see this status accomplished, the Republic of Macedonia will not interfere in the sovereign rights of other states or in their internal affairs.*'²⁶ The Greek government welcomed these assurances from Macedonia, although it still was not fully satisfied. It was pointed out that allowing for changes in borders while excluding territorial losses does not imply the renunciation of new acquisitions. Besides, no amendments had been made to the preamble, which continued to cause concern in Greece.

For the young Republic of Macedonia, it was vital that it obtain recognition in the international arena; with this in mind, its politicians acted as one in co-operating with the European Community. The Macedonian parliament issued a special declaration in which it stated that the Republic of Macedonia would guarantee the rights of national minorities on its territory in compliance with the United Nations Charter. The same declaration was sent to the Arbitration Committee for Yugoslavia, the so-called Badinter Committee,²⁷ which decided on 11 January 1992, that Macedonia, like Slovenia, met the terms for international recognition.

This opinion was not shared by Greece, which offered firm resistance as it tried to prevent Macedonia's entry into the international arena. From that point onwards, negotiations began to develop a compromise formula.

President Gligorov's policy of concessions and negotiations resulted in some success. But Greece did not relent: apart from using the name 'Macedonia' as the offi-

²⁵ 'Deklaracija za suverena i samostojna Republika Makedonija, usvojena od Sobranieto na RM na 17 septemvri 1991 godina (po referendumot)' in A. Tuntev, *Republika Makedonija...*, p. 75.

²⁶ *Konstitucija na Republika Makedonija*, Skopje 1991, pp. 5, 6, 20.

²⁷ The committee was named after Robert Badinter, its chairman, an expert in constitutional law.

cial title of the state, they were also concerned about Macedonia adopting for their state emblem and flag the Vergina sun borrowed from the tomb of Philip II in ancient Aigai (now Vergina). The Greeks persisted in trying to make the Skopje government change the design. Thousands demonstrated in Saloniki and Athens against the Republic. Greece's veto delayed recognition of the Republic of Macedonia by international bodies, like the UN and European Union countries.

Actions and speeches made by the Macedonian president, Kiro Gligorov, that were imbued with compromise, were often criticized by the co-ruling Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDSM),²⁸ the majority party VMRO-DPMNE (VMRO – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity).²⁹ The latter party embraced a strongly nationalistic agenda, which served to antagonize Greece. The public pronouncements of its leader, Georgievski, did not help: '[...] we see hope in Macedonia one day being united'; 'We want to study in depth the civil war in Greece, during which 30,000 Macedonians died, a far greater loss than the SR of Macedonia suffered in World War II.'³⁰ President Gligorov's concessions were met with accusations of treason.

Meanwhile, Greece was persuading the EU of the merits of its position on Macedonia, and President Karamanlis stressed that Skopje '[...] does not have any right, whether historical or ethnological, to use the name Macedonia.'³¹ At a European Council summit meeting in Lisbon on 26-27 June 1992, it was decided that the Republic of Macedonia would be recognized '[...] under a name which did not have the word Macedonia in it.' This position was criticized by the Skopje government, and the parliament passed on 3 June a declaration which said, 'The name Macedonia is a fundamental description of the Macedonian nation, which constitutes a majority in the Republic of Macedonia, and to deny its existence is to discriminate against it [...]'³²

In January 1993, the Greek foreign minister, Michalis Papakonstantinou, issued a memorandum to the UN in which he presented arguments against admitting the Republic of Macedonia into the organization. He accused Skopje of trying to monopolize the name Macedonia when the state comprised only 38.5% of Macedonian territory, which is only a small proportion when compared to the Greek part of 51%. He also warned that Greece would not allow the Macedonian flag to fly on the UN building, as it used the theme of the Vergina sun (a 16-point starburst).

To prevent the conflict from escalating, on 9 April 1993, the Republic of Macedonia became the 181st state to be admitted to the UN, but because of Greek protests,

²⁸ Social-Democratic Union of Macedonia is the name the party adopted in April 1991; it was previously named SKM-PDP (League of Communists of Macedonia – Party of the Democratic Transition). It was headed from 1992 by Branko Crvenkovski, a former prime minister.

²⁹ VMRO-DPMNE, the party was created on 17 June 1990, headed by Ljubčo Georgievski. It claimed to locate itself in the tradition of the Ilinden Uprising and VMRO activities back in 1903.

³⁰ L. Georgievski, *Ostvaruvawe...*, pp. 14, 20.

³¹ E. Kofos, 'The Unresolved...', p. 129.

³² Clu`ben vesnik na Republika Makedonija br. 08-2812/2, 3 juli 1992 god, Skopje.

its admission was under the name of the 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (FYROM). Resolution 817 (1993) stressed that the country met the conditions for membership in the UN, but it indicated that a difference of opinion concerning its name needed to be resolved. In the words of President Gligorov, 'the admission of Macedonia into an international organization like the UN as an equal member will help her attain a wholly new status in talks about her recognition by all countries.'³³

Realizing the failure of its policy (all EU countries apart from Greece recognized Macedonia), Athens³⁴ decided on 16 February 1994 to apply an economic blockade and closed the port of Saloniki to Macedonian supplies, including, most notably, oil. Only then did it become clear how important Macedonia's links with its other neighbours were: Albania and Bulgaria, and also another Balkan country, Turkey.

A breakthrough in Greco-Macedonian relations came on 13 September 1995, with the signing in New York of a temporary accord (for seven years).³⁵ The document does not mention the parties' names, designating them as the first and the second party. The first party (Greece) committed itself to recognizing the second party (the Republic of Macedonia) as an independent and sovereign state. Both parties recognized their present borders as being permanent and unchangeable, confirmed their mutually open status, and renounced territorial claims. They also pledged to observe human rights.

Thus after four years of conflict between Greece and Macedonia, mutual relations were normalized. The accord was signed at the UN headquarters by Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias for Greece and Prime Minister Stevo Crvenkovski for Macedonia, in the presence of UN negotiator Cyrus Vance. Under its terms, Greece agreed to recognize the new state and lift the economic blockade, and Macedonia would give up its emblem, the 16-pointed sun of Vergina, and to remove from its constitution articles referring to Macedonian claims to the Greek province by the same name. The Macedonian parliament passed a law on 5 October 1995, changing the state's emblem and flag. Greece lifted its 19-month long unilateral economic embargo in October 1995.

It should be emphasized that normalization was achieved after many months of mediation by UN and American officials. In January 1996 diplomatic relations were established between both countries, and on 27 February 1996, embassies were opened in Skopje and Athens respectively. Yet all was not rosy. Greece still did not recognize the republic's name, the existence of the Macedonian nation, or a Macedonian minority on its own territory. Additionally, violations of the Macedonian Republic's airspace by Greeks, such as on 23 August 1994, and 27 March 1997 adversely affected mutual relations.

³³ For more on this subject, see C. Chiclet, 'Pourquoi la Grèce a peur de la Macédoine' in C. Chiclet, B. Lory (eds.), *La République de Macédoine. Nouvelle venue dans le concert européen*, Paris 1998, pp. 93-103.

³⁴ Characteristically, on 1 January 1994, Greece concluded its EU presidency.

³⁵ For the text of the document, see A. Tuntev, *Republika Makedonija...*, pp. 355-361.

Although talks concerning the name were not suspended, they progressed sluggishly and ineffectually. In March 1997, Skopje hosted Greece's foreign minister, Theodoros Pangalos. He gave notice that unless an accord was reached, Greece might hinder Macedonia's accession into NATO and the EU. Only then did President Kiro Gligorov, in an interview for the Greek *To Vima* newspaper, admit that he was prepared to accept a 'dual name' formula. This would entail Macedonia using its constitutional name at home and internationally, while Greece, 'if it is not ready to accept the name, may call the country in any way it chooses.'³⁶ Negotiations continued and seemed to promise a satisfactory conclusion. As Kofos relates, in 1998 both parties were close to accepting the Vance-proposed Republic of Macedonia-Skopje.³⁷ The constitutional name would remain intact, and only in international and bilateral relations with Greece would the double-barrel name apply. The plan was revived in 1999. The United States encouraged progress in the talks because, before it proceeded to bomb Yugoslavia, it wanted all controversial issues in adjacent territories resolved. Yet American pressure was not too strong as Washington, while preparing to intervene in Kosovo, wanted to induce Skopje to co-operate, which undermined Macedonian-Serbian relations. In the summer 1998, the Republic of Macedonia agreed to co-operate with NATO in operation Joint Guarantor by allowing NATO rapid deployment forces into its territory.³⁸

The Macedonians' greatest fear was that they would be pressurised into accepting a geographical-related name, such as the Republic of Skopje, or the Central Balkan Republic, or the Republic of Wardar, or the Independent Republic of Skopje, etc.; or one including the word Macedonia with a qualifier, like Upper Macedonia, or North Macedonia, or New Macedonia. Were this to happen, it would preclude the notion of a Macedonian nation; there would only be Upper Macedonian, North Macedonian, etc. The Macedonians wanted a name derived from the territory on which their state is based – from Macedonia, 'as it arose within a historical space (Macedonia) and in a historical evolutionary process (name, nation).'³⁹ Early in 2001, negotiations gravitated towards the use of the name *Gorna Makedonija* (Upper Macedonia) in two words, or simply *Gornamakedonija* as one word. Greek sources have suggested that this name for the purpose of conducting international relations was agreed to by Prime Minister Georgievski and the leader of the opposition Banko Crvenkovski. Opposition to such agreement was voiced by President Boris Trajkovski, who stated, '[...] the name [of a country] is part of national identity, a question that is the most important of all, a matter of pride and dignity.'⁴⁰ A survey conducted on 16-17 February 2001, showed that people were deeply opposed

³⁶ K. Gligorov, 'The Neighbour', *To Vima*, 29 June 1997.

³⁷ E. Kofos, 'The Unresolved...', p. 159.

³⁸ For the Republic of Macedonia relations with neighbouring states, see I. Stawowy-Kawka, *Historia Macedonii*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 2000, pp. 306-314.

³⁹ S. Kiselinovski, 'Istoriska legitimnost', *Nova Makedonija*, 25 February 2003.

⁴⁰ 'Disturbances in FYROM over the Name', Macedonian Press Agency, 14 February 2001.

to a referendum on name change which would offer two options: The Republic of North Macedonia or Upper Macedonia. More than 90% of respondents were opposed to both names, while 76.7% of Albanians asked were against such changes. Only 2.4% of the Republic's citizens conceded to a name change, while 76.9% declared that should a Greco-Macedonian agreement be signed, they would demand that it be rescinded and that the cabinet resign.⁴¹ The government could not count on popular support in this matter despite a major threat posed by Albanians in 2001, and resolving the conflict with Athens, it turned out, was not an option.

In 2001 the Albanians unexpectedly rebelled in the Republic of Macedonia, and took up arms to fight for their rights. US and EU mediators, James Pardew and Francois Leotard, jettisoned the pro-Macedonian policy, as they were aware of the danger of the region being destabilized, and induced the Macedonian government to sign an agreement (the Ohrid Accord of 31 August 2001) in which it accepted almost all of the Albanian demands. It did not concede – as had been suggested in the Accord⁴² – the creation of the Republic of Macedonia as an independent, civic, sovereign state under law in which all citizens are equal. For years after the war, the Republic had painstakingly reconstructed the history of its nation, territory, language, and culture. For this reason, it was considered crucial to introduce into the constitutional preamble a statement of the national Macedonian character of the state. Such a statement was entered after the constitutional change of 2001,⁴³ with no opposition from the Albanians.

The crisis had an impact on the agreement with Greece. American and EU politicians felt that the compromise the Macedonians accepted vis-à-vis the Albanians deserved a reward and they tried to persuade Athens to take a more lenient stand in the naming dispute. On the other hand, the Greeks knew how difficult it would be to force the introduction of more constitutional amendments in a short period of time. Resolving the name problem would have a positive, consolidating effect on Macedonian society and help it regain a lost sense of security. When the parliament had ratified the main points of the Ohrid Accord, the United States recognized the name the Republic of Macedonia in mutual relations. At present, Macedonia is recognized under this name by 120 states including the US, China, Russia, and Poland. But in the UN, NATO, and the EU, the appellation in use is still FYROM.

The Macedonian government found support in its involvement in the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP), and in the signing of an Agreement on Stabilization and Affiliation with the EU in Luxembourg on 9 April 2001. By December 2005, the Republic of Macedonia had met the conditions for EU membership negotiations. These, however, did not make any progress, while Athens and Skopje both engaged in an exchange of malevolent gestures which were hardly conducive to harmony. In 2005 Greece refused to admit a plane that was marked

⁴¹ Ibid., see also *Dnevnik*, 19 February 2001.

⁴² *Framework Agreement*, at <[http: crisis.vmacedonia.com/doc/fagreeme.htm](http://crisis.vmacedonia.com/doc/fagreeme.htm)>.

⁴³ *Ustav na Republika Makedonija*, Skopje 2001, p. 5.

'Republic of Macedonia,' carrying the Macedonian president to Athens. He then cancelled the visit. At the 62nd session of the UN General Assembly, the Macedonian foreign minister, Sergam Kerin, was named its chairman. According to the provisions of resolution 817 (1993), he was to discharge his function as a representative of FYROM, but his official letter of thanks for his election and the cover of his speech released to the media bore the name Republic of Macedonia. In addition to this, the domestic airport in Skopje was named after Alexander the Great. Such incidents did not help to develop dialogue with Greece.

Greco-Macedonian naming talks resumed more vigorously in 2008. Greece had warned Skopje that unless an agreement was reached, it would veto Macedonia's admission to NATO. UN negotiator Matthew Nimetz proposed five names: Democratic Republic of Macedonia, Constitutional Republic of Macedonia, Independent Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Upper Macedonia, Republic of New Macedonia. None of them were accepted. At a NATO summit in Bucharest on 3-4 April 2008 as a result of a Greek protest, Macedonia was not invited to join the organisation until the name dispute was resolved. In this case, the Greek veto proved to be effective, given the transparent lack of support for Macedonia from among the remaining allies.

Macedonia persists in its efforts to resolve the issue in a dialogue with Greece. In November it filed a complaint against Greece to the International Court of Justice. In it, Skopje accused Athens of hindering Macedonia's accession into NATO and other international organizations. As late as September 2007, Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis argued that Greece would not stand in the way of FYROM joining the EU if it stopped insisting on accession under its constitutional name. Otherwise Athens would reject its membership application.⁴⁴

Although both capitals, Athens and Skopje, have declared a desire to seek compromise, their confrontational, inflexible positions have effectively prevented an understanding being reached.

Translated by Tadeusz Stanek

⁴⁴ 'Report by Khiotis: I Never Used the Word Veto', *To Vima*, 11 September 2007.

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